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Preface

The papers in this volume draw on recent ethnographic research in rural Afghanistan for case material in which to examine dynamics of ethnic identities and intergroup relations there. They are united by a focus on the evolving interfaces between local minorities and their practical incorporation in a multi-ethnic state. It is our intention both to expand the empirical base for such discussion and to help ground that discussion in specific local situations. These papers are revisions of oral presentations from a panel at the 11th annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, November 10 1977, in New York City. We appreciate the invitation by the Afghanistan Council to publish them together as an Occasional Paper of the Afghanistan Council of The Asia Society. This format preserves the unity in which they were conceived and reaches those most immediately concerned with Afghan studies.

A loose comparative frame for examining the diversity of ethnic processes and intergroup relations in contemporary Afghanistan is provided by the historic Pashtun expansion into the territories and activities of other groups in Afghanistan during the present century. The idea for papers on this topic, originally suggested by Richard Strand, grew out of discussions among the authors and others beginning with a conference on development in Afghanistan at the University of Nebraska-Omaha Center for Afghanistan Studies in September 1976. The particular researches upon which the present papers draw were not originally designed with this topic in mind. Barfield's research in Qataghan focused on the organization of contemporary pastoralism. Shahrani's work in Wakhan and Pamir dealt with cultural ecology. Strand's interests in Nuristan were primarily linguistic and ethnohistorical. Canfield has published substantial and original contributions on the organization of sectarianism among the Hazara. Anderson's Pashtun research focused on tribal law and interpersonal relations. But each of us worked across ethnically plural settings and, in the course of separate researches between 1966 and 1974, had reason to take notice of the coincidence of Pashtun expansion and national consolidation in those settings.

Given this overlap we chose a broad common focus on the impact on local minorities of this coincidence. Additional contributions from researchers in Europe engaged in work more directly related than our own to "ethnic" problems were precluded by distance and the time constraints of the MESA program format; so rather than attempt comprehensive coverage we have opted for working papers with limited aims in the conviction that the primary need in Afghan studies is for a richer descriptive base. Anderson's introductory remarks to the session are expanded here to indicate some of the context that these papers address.

That introduction as well as the present papers benefit from discussion at the meeting by Warren Swidler, Associate Professor and Chairman of Anthropology at Brooklyn College-CUNY, and Karen Blu, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at New York University. Swidler has conducted extensive research on ecology and social organization in Baluchistan (Swidler 1973), and Blu's research

among North American Indians has centered on questions of ethnicity in complex societies. For economy and because our intentions here are more descriptive than theoretical we have chosen to take note of their comments and of those from the audience in the present drafts rather than to record them separately. Thus it is all the more fitting that the stimulation of their remarks be especially acknowledged.

Questions raised by and in response to these papers make the necessity for more intensive descriptions of actual local settings in Afghanistan all the more compelling. These settings are the contexts in which the lives of all the people there take shape and toward whose comprehension these working papers are offered. Opinions expressed in these papers are those of their authors and do not reflect those of their institutions, funding agencies, the Middle East Studies Association or The Asia Society.

JWA
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Introduction and Overview

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In characterizing the Near East as a "mosaic" of cultures and peoples Carleton Coon (1958) sought to capture a particular part-whole relationship between small, diversely originated, often endogamous and economically specialized local groups and the embracive polities that seem something less than the sum of their parts. His descriptive metaphor broadly emphasizes the perdurability of local diversities in the composite societies of this region and draws attention to an organizational character in the relations among its various peoples more complex than that suggested by chronicles of conquests and successions. The variety of peoples along the slopes of the Hindu Kush where the great culture areas of Central, South and Southwest Asia meet in Afghanistan exemplifies this endurance of local social and cultural forms within groupings done and undone over the course of time that never quite transcended the diversity of their parts.

In the literature on Afghanistan attention to this diversity keynotes nineteenth century accounts of the variety of peoples, comparisons between them and often ingenious speculation about their relations and origins. The explanatory attention embedded in these descriptions and reconstructions tended to focus on ethnogenesis and a kind of cultural inventory analysis as sufficiently accounting for the diversity itself. Bellew (1891), Bacon (1951, 1958), Schurman (1962), Janata (1962/63, 1971), Franz (1972), Groetzbach (1972) and especially the many composite handbooks and other secondary treatments offer data and interpretation in such a frame. Given its classificatory emphasis this approach tends to take diversity itself for granted, explaining it by reference to something else, rather than asking what sort of social "fact" it is. It tends to accept rather than to explore, except in historical terms, the self-identification of local groups or, as is frequently the case, how their neighbors identify them.

Questions about ethnic diversity and the relations between different groups have also been put in terms of modern, but still essentially exteriorist, concerns with the integration of multi-ethnic states. Adamec (1967), Gregorian (1969), Newell (1972), Poullada (1973), Dupree (1964, 1973, 1975), some Russians (Slobin & Slobin 1969) and several Afghans themselves (_e.g._, Farhadi 1970, Kakar 1971, Miran 1977) essay on ethnic diversity from the perspective of relating modern, national government to "traditional" society, particularly in respect to political and economic development. Depending on the authors' point of view and professional interests they variously find problems and prospects in the ways they perceive diversity. Questions about conflict often frame such discussions, for embedded in them is a notion that "traditions" such as ethnicity obstruct "modernization," by which seems to be meant the sort of politically unified and economically organized society such as Western nations are imagined to be. In this frame ethnic relations are seen through policy problems that focus on explaining something else.

Between reduction to historical residues and over-construction as a policy problem, the dynamics of ethnic and intergroup relations in Afghanistan have received on the whole little first-order description. With a few notable exceptions (Canfield 1973a & b, Ferdinand 1962 & 1969, Barth 1959 & 1969, Tapper 1973, Glatzer 1977), there is in print very little case material of much depth upon which to ground analysis. Instead, information apart from that based on archival research (e.g., Gregorian 1969, Kakar 1971, Groetzbach 1972, Tapper 1973) tends to be folklore-like, an oral body of knowledge in circulation among Afghanists that derives from their personal experiences, often as not largely in Kabul, and reflects concerns of Afghans at the center and top who are the natural acquaintances of historians and political scientists. Anecdotal information is occasionally put imaginatively to use (e.g., Poullada 1973); but in a perspective at once ethnographically wider and more sociological, it largely formalizes situations and concerns peculiar to the more national-minded and foreign-oriented sectors of the society. The reference of such views, no less than their context, is necessarily limited by being drawn from a narrow base.

Both to expand the empirical base and to relate such discussions to the local levels where people from different groups meet and interact in everyday affairs, the present papers examine specific case materials drawn from recent ethnographic research in rural Afghanistan. As their primary intent is descriptive the frame of these papers is open and exploratory. They do have a common substantive focus, however, on contexts set by the historic Pashtun expansion throughout Afghanistan during this century.

* * *

The character of contemporary ethnic diversity in Afghanistan and the related problems of national integration are set locally in large measure by the expansion of Pashtun settlement and influence beyond their historic center in southern and eastern Afghanistan (and the North-West Frontier province of western Pakistan). The reasons for this expansion are a complex mix of mostly external factors that both fixed current international boundaries and re-directed Pashtun attention from its historical focus on the Indus valley toward what is now the interior of modern Afghanistan. The history of the past two hundred years is not only one of fitful ascendence of Pashtun on a stage not of their own making. Since the nation-building reign of Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901), the on-the-ground reality in many parts of Afghanistan has included Pashtun immigration (see esp. Ferdinand 1962, Kakar 1971, Tapper 1973). Many aspects of ethnic and intergroup relations currently are consequences of these processes and of local awareness of them on the part of non-Pashtun.

Kakar's and Tapper's historical investigations and our own field researches suggest that this expansion is not simply a matter of conquest, certainly not since Amir Abdur Rahman's decisive incorporation of the Hazarajat, Turkistan and Nuristan before 1900. These papers point to a more multifaceted and evolving variety of interfaces, including those involving Pashtun only partially (e.g., Strand's and Shahrani's papers in this collection). In outlining features of specific local situations these papers make no attempt to be comprehensive or conclusory about Afghanistan in its entirety. They

are instead working papers that aim at once more narrowly and more wholistically to elucidate organizational dimensions of what, following the initial suggestion of Richard Strand, was characterized for convenience as "ethnic processes and intergroup relations."

The term "ethnic" covers a variety of reference, both substantive and methodological. Karen Blu noted that sociological concepts of "ethnicity" contain embedded in them our particular concerns about nationality and may be inappropriate in other cultures (a point also raised by Canfield, below) and Warren Swidler discussed how satisfactorily to identify communities for analysis. Problems of predefinition and reference are encountered, for example, in trying to relate realities on the ground to "ethnic group" maps of Afghanistan, of which that published in Sovetskaya Etnografiya in 1955 (reprinted in the Central Asian Review in 1956) is the base model for all subsequent maps. Concerns of this sort were one of our points of departure, for the true complexities of population distribution are obscured rather than revealed by such representations.[1] The simple fact that boundaries are not all of a piece, that they vary according to the situation, is all the more glossed over the more detailed such maps become. It is to retrieve a fuller and more organizational grasp of the dimensions of "ethnic" identities and their role in intergroup relations that we emphasize here process or the action-oriented properties and impacts of intergroup relations in specific cases. Those processes framing intergroup relations, rather than "ethnicity" generally in Afghanistan, are our immediate topic.

By the term "ethnic process" I understood Strand to mean - and others seem to to as well - that "ethnic" identities sociologically emerge in situations where people of different traditions and organizations come together or are brought together in contexts set by terms external to themselves. Indeed, it is the emergence of wider community, such as in a territorial state, that creates "ethnicity" among heretofore disjoined groups which have become components in some encompassing structure.

The encompassing structure in this case is constructed of national suzerainty and Pashtun population expansion in concert with the rise of that suzerainty. The key figure connecting these is Amir Abdur Rahman who, to consolidate his realm, encouraged Pashtun emigration to other parts of Afghanistan as no ruler had before (see Kakar 1971, and for case studies Ferdinand 1962, Tapper 1973). To be sure, the "Iron Amir" was not slow to treat homeland Pashtun as just another component of the nation, much to their annoyance; but essential to the policy established by him and followed by most subsequent rulers was the joining of nation-building to Pashtun resettlement outside the hills and valleys from Nangarhar through Kandahar and nearly to Herat that is their traditional homeland (watan). National integration was not the sole purpose of encouraging emigration, and colonization is far from the whole story, but the connection between national consolidation and "Pashtunization" endured, especially in the consciousnesses of non-Pashtun.

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[1]For an examination of the organizational terms of more specific population distributions, see Anderson (1975) for Ghilzai; comparable material is provided by Barth (1959) for Swat, Steul (1973) for Khost and Glatzer (1977) for Pashtun in the Firuzkoh.

This is not to interpret the Kabul government in the twentieth century as a creature of Pashtun tribalism. The government necessarily and naturally has interests of its own and a nationalist constituency. And the feelings of many Pashtun tribesmen toward the government differ little from those of non-Pashtun. All alike resent interference and seek advantage from Kabul. But Pashtun are often perceived as enjoying favor. Many provincial government posts and until recently nearly all army commissions were filled by Pashtun, and Pashtun figure prominently among the beneficiaries of such population re-distribution schemes as nomad settlement and agricultural development, all of which conduce to impressions on the part of many that Pashtun and government interests coincide. The "Iron Amir" was clear enough about his own motives in his memoirs (1900). Removing Pashtun, often in whole groups, to other areas by force or persuasion had the dual effect of converting potential dissidents into national partisans and thereby fostering the new community of a national, if still plural, state. Results, of course, are matters of degree that vary from place to place; but broadly that effect was, in part, as expected.

As immigrant Pashtun develop relations with other local people, much of the feeling on both sides depends on the nature of those relations and the auspices under which they develop. The contrasting situations described by Barfield and Shahrani (and to a lesser extent by Strand) especially make this clear. Echoing Canfield's earlier study (1973a), Shahrani and Strand describe situations of partial displacement in which local groups are penetrated and made into specialized components of a larger system at least indirectly fostered by the government and over which the local people have little or no control. Contrarily, where a more or less open country was "developed" jointly by members of many groups responding individually in the context set by Spinzar Company activities in Qataghan, Barfield finds the emerging status system based less on origins or group modalities than on socio-economic relations organized along more class-like lines with rich/poor and employer/employee being the salient distinctions. Moreover, the generation of ethnicity from kinship is patent: where kinship is not organizationally relevant as the basis of grouping (on at least one side), neither is "ethnicity."

It will be interesting to see if the researches of Asen Balikci in Narin, of Pierre & Michelene Centlivres in Baghlan and Takhar, of Richard & Nancy Tapper in Fariab and of others more directly concerned with "ethnic" problems will confirm the duality of these patterns. If they do, it should provide one possible key to the complexity of intergroup relations in Afghanistan and to the contradictions of fragmentary reports. A rough rule-of-thumb would relate penetration or encapsulation of local groups, such as Shahrani describes in Wakhan and Strand in Nuristan, to heightened (or engendered) self- and other-consciousness in terms of making boundaries the basis for organizing activities; while frontier (unbounded) situations where all are immigrants in a commercial context that fosters typing in functional terms, such as Barfield describes, tend to be non-ethnically (or less ethnically) conceived class-like phenomena. Such a rule does not predict the relations of structural to functional variables but identifies what about those relations is problematic. Certainly, these papers do not support viewing such processes as mutually exclusive or as exhausting all possibilities, but rather that these processes are complexly interwoven according to how particular situations get defined. Also certainly, the situation in Kunduz, where the Spinzar enterprises attracted

population into a previously empty but developable area, is unique in rural Afghanistan. What the papers do suggest is that no single variable or simple formula will describe all situations or even any particular one.

These four papers provide insufficient basis for any conclusions except to urge that intergroup relations are complex and emergent, that they are tied to specific local conditions and that they change even as they are encountered. Sociological classification alone will go only so far in grasping this complexity before merely reproducing the variety it aims to encompass. It is the particular lesson of Canfield's present paper that we really know little of how (any) Afghans think of ethnicity and intergroup relations and that this is crucial for grasping what is "actually" going on. In a sense, the other papers and the panel as a whole have taken shape in the context of Canfield's own prior pioneering research (1973a, 1973b) on the cultural-ecological aspects of marginal sectarianism. His present contribution goes beyond that frame to truly new questions in Afghan studies. Whether his specific argument that sectarian differences loom largest in Afghanistan is born out - and the present précis contains only a portion of his discussion - it is indubitable that the more profound grasp of intergroup relations will come of apprehending how Afghans themselves conceive of and represent them. That is largely unknown at the present.

* * *

In this connection, information from the Pashtun side of the encounters that are our subject is a neccessary complement to the present papers. I have suggested elsewhere (Anderson 1975, 1976) that Pashtun tend to think of kinship (including affinal as well as descent relations) as the mediator of individual and collectivity, or that what we call kinship and what we call ethnicity are for them joined in a single framework. Pashtun conceive of themselves as united and bounded by common patrilineal descent; so "ethnicity" presents itself in some of the same forms as kinship. "Ethnicity" and "kinship" are covered by the same term, qawm, implying co-descent (which seems to be the case also for Nuristani and Turkic peoples, cf., Shahrani and Strand in this volume). The crucial relation in that frame is between the culturally defined sameness or difference of social actors. On the basis of sameness of identity, cooperation and joint actions can proceed in a frame of mutuality or equality, a collapsing of distinctions between persons. On the basis of different identities, only complementarity can organize a relationship, and complementarity for Pashtun fosters not mutuality but opposition resolved as hierarchy. Put abstractly, this comes near to being true of social interaction generally; but it is culturally true for Pashtun. The terms of the symbolic frame in which they conceptualize social relations can be seen concretely in the variation of sharecropping arrangements from those interpreted and enacted as partnerships to those organized as between employer and employee. This ontology holds the implication for Pashtun, quite (perhaps too) bluntly, of relationships marked by superiority/inferiority entailing the superior encompassing the inferior in his own purposes and identity. Thus "ethnicity" as a mode for relating to non-Pashtun takes shape in a hierarchical frame. [2]

[2]In this connection, the research of Frederick Barth in Swat and Baluchistan in West Pakistan (1959, 1960, 1969) has a relevance so far little exploited

Difference (hierarchy) can imply enmity, though not necessarily. What it does for Pashtun is to pose dilemmas of dominating or being dominated, the only alternative being to break off relations entirely, which is frequently the case. From this way of thinking derives much of the storied aggressiveness and self-assertiveness of Pashtun demeanor, manners with which others are sufficiently familiar to resent on occasion and often (in private) to satirize. It is as well reflected in the British literature in the ubiquitous descriptions of Pashtun "character" as treacherous, changeable, aggressive, proud, independent, unscrupulous and the like. Non-Pashtun are acutely aware of this interactional pose, encountering it most often in those Pashtun whose relations with everyone are complementary, the swaggering and often combative - but equally hospital and flexible - nomads.

Such behavior and others' reactions to it should not be taken _prima facie_ as evidence of hostility. Hostility is understood by Pashtun and non-Pashtun in their own terms and has many roots and expressions, of which hierarchy is not the most important or essential, as anyone can attest who has experienced the very hierarchical and arms-length relationship of Pashtun hospitality. But for intergroup relations in which Pashtun figure _qua_ Pashtun this feature of their interaction styles relates to phenomena that many of us have observed privately and to which many Afghans draw our attention - namely, that with the Pashtun expansion has gone a spreading "Pashtunization" of public manners. As one Tajik near Kabul put it to me: "How else is one to deal with them [except in their own terms]?"

If it be the case that Pashtun put the stamp of their own styles on their relations with others - and historical evidence is ambiguous in this regard - it would be fruitless to ask to what extent. The important fact is that the impression obtains among at least some Afghans and, entering into _their_ definitions of situation, is thereby part of those situations. Of course, such models of demeanor are stereotypes; but stereotypes are "real" enough representations to the people who use them to comprehend their social worlds and who regard them as of those worlds. Analytically, this impression of "Pashtunization" points to the emerging culture or, more likely, _cultures_ of intergroup relations that accompany articulations of heretofore more separate local communities into a wider community as components of that larger whole. Consisting of conceptions of self and others by which such relations are locally understood as coherent activities, cultures of intergroup relations combine pre-existing conceptions with newly generated ones in complex ways and in various settings that are little understood but highly suggestive.

Whether it may or may not be historically the case that the behavior of others

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by non-anthropological area specialists. In particular, aspects of the impact of ethnic boundaries on local organization that Barth described for Swat seem to be replicated in parts of Nuristan and the Hazarajat where Pashtun absorb non-Pashtun to regional (but not always Pashtun) systems as a political reflex of acquiring the basic asset of agricultural society, control of land (_cf._, Ferdinand 1962). Pashtun success _qua_ Pashtun depends on this (_cf._, Barfield, below).

is being "Pashtunized," and irrespective of how much others contribute their own styles to the organization of intergroup relations, many Afghans commonly attribute this to Pashtun and its diffusion to what has been characterized in other connections as "internal imperialism." Informants indicate that one aspect of this diffusion is that in addition to marking relations of Pashtun nomads with others - pastoralist or otherwise, Pashtun outside their homeland have many characteristics in common (cf., Anderson 1975: 582, 585) - it also characterizes the pose adopted by many government officials in provincial posts. There, as with nomads and other "strangers" not on their own home ground, it may be a reflex of situated hierarchy and the complementarity between autochthone and outsider, especially in the petitioner-disposer relationship that characterizes most persons' dealings with government in the countryside. Certainly, not all officials seek consistently so to present themselves, but the powerful stranger is still identified for many with Pashtun and with impressions of their expansion and influence paralleling that of the government.

The specific "Pashtunization" to which informants refer is probably less a matter of copying Pashtun styles than of the fact that a ubiquitous feature of intergroup relations is that they involve dealing with Pashtun and that Pashtun approach such relations in a Hobbesian manner. Pashtun are in the first instance the most (though not the only) mobile element in Afghanistan and, to many, the "stranger" who is par excellence both insider and outsider (cf., Simmel 1950: 402-408). That mobility has been exploited by the "ruling institution" since the Iron Amir made it his instrument of national consolidation, so a culture of intergroup relations importantly takes shape around Pashtun (immigrant) activities and in response to those activities. Moreover, the per definition complimentarity involved in such relations and the ways that Pashtun gloss them tend to encode a hierarchical construction on intergroup relations. To have any other requires a gloss of mutuality which may or may not emerge according to the specific activities in which intergroup relations are organized. If Barfield's analysis is any guide, then transcendence of pre-given modalities for organization (such as qawm) could be said to involve the entrance of all into the social field as "strangers," as equally from outside. While situations do evolve, as Shahrani and Strand make plain, the auspices under which they are inaugurated tend to survive reflexively in adaptations to them. The respective commerces which organize Takhar and Wakhan-Pamir thus set the situations to which people there respond.

Two very general levels of intergroup relations can be seen as dialectically related in activities taking place in particular situations that emerge from the participants' attempts to comprehend them and their roles in them. If indeed as the papers suggest, such relations turn out to be organized by activity-focused cultures, then that may be one of the two most important things to grasp about them. The other is that these "cultures," if they may be properly so-called, center on the role of the "stranger," whose position both inside and outside, implying deep if narrow familiarity, was located by Simmel (1950) quintessentially in the trader and the financier, participants radically uncommitted to and hence "objective" about the values of the other in the sense of regarding those as something to know about rather than to believe in.

The ambiguities and seeming contradictions of intergroup relations inhere in this dual character of the Stranger:

> ...strangeness is not due to different and ununderstandable matters. It is rather caused by the fact that similarity, harmony, and nearness are accompanied by the feeling that they are not really the unique property of this particular relationship: they are something more general, something which potentially prevails between the partners and an indeterminate number of others, and therefore gives the relation, which alone [of all possible relations] was realized, no inner and exclusive necessity.
>
> On the other hand, there is a kind of 'strangeness' that rejects the very commonness based on something more general which embraces the parties. The relation of the Greeks to the Barbarians is perhaps typical here, as are all cases in which it is precisely general attributes, felt to be specifically and purely human, that are disallowed to the other. But 'stranger,' here, has no positive meaning; the relation to him is a non-relation; he is not what is relevant here, a member of the group.
>
> As a group member, rather, he is near and far <u>at the same time</u>, as is characteristic of relations founded only on generally human commonness. But between nearness and distance there arises a specific tension when the consciousness that only the quite general is common, stresses that which is not common. ...For this reason, strangers are not really conceived as individuals, but as strangers of a particular type: the element of distance is no less general in regard to them than the element of nearness (Simmel 1950: 407).

Simmel thus urges us to grasp the transcendence of particularity (<u>e.g.</u>, as described by Barfield) as well as its reification (<u>e.g.</u>, described by Canfield) and operationalization (<u>e.g.</u>, described by Shahrani and Strand) within a single, unified frame whose dimensions are fundamental social processes.

* * *

These are only some of the interesting avenues suggested by more empirical constructions on large abstractions that have quite human referents. A fuller grasp of ethnic process and intergroup relations in Afghanistan will require not only more ethnography but historical study, incorporation of the growing body of population and other "development" research and contributions particularly from Afghans themselves. If some formulations in the past have been anthropologically naive, much of the reason must lie in the want of systematic ethnography. That concern, remarked on by the discussants, is apposite in these papers: a general need for a more thorough grasp of the communities involved or the stages on which actions take place and a systematic grasp of the actors' conceptions of these matters on a much more fundamental (ontological) level. The authors were and are aware of such problems. As anthropologists, we are all committed to elucidating Afghan realities rather than simply examining those from the perspective of our own; and the very nature of anthropological study is intensive inquiry. Our aims in these papers were not to resolve questions but to identify them for, in the state of this issue, we are still discovering the right questions.

Ethnic Competition and Tribal Schism in Eastern Nuristan

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The protagonists in this study are the Kom Nuristani people who occupy the lower Laṇḍay Sin basin and areas across the Kunar River in the easternmost Hindu-Kush region of Afghanistan, and a loose confederation of Gujar and Mëšwāṇi patrilineages whose members have established residence in Kom territory in various side valleys of the Kunar. The Gujars are an Indo-Aryan-speaking people who have spread westward from the Gujrat area of the Panjāb. The Mëšwāṇi are Pashto speakers but they deny that they are "Afghans" in the sense that they do not fit into the Afghan [Pashtun - ed.] tribal genealogical charter. They are also called in Pashto bandawāl, 'alpine-stable owners'.[1] Although the Gujars and Mëšwāṇi are ethnically and linguistically distinct from each other, the Kom often deal with them collectively, and I shall refer to them here by the term Gujírbanḍévol, which means in Kamvíri (the Kom language) literally 'Gujars and banḍawāls'.

According to Nuristani traditions, Afghans long ago gained most of the best bottom land in the Kunar-Kabul basin for cultivation forcing the Nuristanis into the back valleys and mountains where cultivable land is scarce. The Nuristanis have managed to subsist in such areas because they have a truly mixed economy of agriculture and animal husbandry and the scarcity of productive agricultural land is offset by the abundant dairy production afforded by good alpine pasturage (Strand 1975). Since the Nuristani occupation of the Hindu Kush recesses, interethnic territorial conflicts have centered over control and use of such pasturage.[2] Before 1896 such conflict was usually confined among the various Nuristani tribes; but since that time, when the Nuristanis were conquered, converted to Islam and incorporated into the Afghan state, they have more or less desisted from intertribal warfare and tribal boundaries have become fixed.

This paper is based on field research in Afghanistan during 1967-1969 and 1973-1974. Funding came partially from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc. and the South Asia Program of Cornell University.

[1]An account of the ethnolinguistic position of the Nuristani peoples appears in Strand 1973.

[2]I do not consider the slaughter that the Nuristanis wreaked on the neighboring Afghans before 1896 as territorial conflict. Rather, it was institutionalized vengeance for the Afghans' murder of the Kom culture hero Giṣ, an act that symbolized the expulsion of the Kom from their original homeland in the Kunar basin.

However, in the past 70 years the Gujars and the Meswāṇi, both of whom subsist almost exclusively on alpine goatherding, have responded to demographic pressure from the east by infiltrating the southern pasturelands of the Kom tribe. Because the Kom herds had not recovered from the decimation suffered during the conquest of 1896, those pasturelands had fallen into disuse, and the Kom had agreed to allow the Gujírbaṇdëvols to use the area seasonally in return for a grazing fee of one goat per twenty grazed. The agreement worked fairly well until about thirty years ago, when the Gujírbaṇdëvols reneged on the grazing fee and began establishing permanent settlements in Kom territory. Since then hostilities have become perennial with occasional shootings and rustlings on both sides.

The Kom have always had a reputation as the "wildest" of the Nuristani tribes and in preconquest times they could have easily expelled the Gujírbaṇdëvols from their territory. Yet the Gujírbaṇdëvols remain successful in achieving their designs on Kom territory. How have they succeeded?

First, they have secured the persistent backing of key provincial officials. Having enjoined the Kom from waging open warfare on the intruders, these officials have pursued a negotiated settlement to the issue, with themselves as mediators; but all compromises have so far favored the Gujírbaṇdëvols' position. The Kom allege that the Gujírbaṇdëvols have sometimes bought the backing of certain officials and that feelings of ethnic solidarity between Afghan provincial officials and the Meswāṇi foster an anti-Nuristani bias. However, the reason for the government's failure to produce a solution that is acceptable to the Kom apparently goes beyond considerations of prejudice or interethnic intrigue. An account of events that happened in the early 1970s illustrates rather typically how the repeated attempts of the Kom to settle the issue through governmental mediation are continually thwarted.[3]

After some skirmishes between Kom and Gujars, the wāli (governor) of Kunarhā Province requested tribal leaders from both sides to gather in the provincial capital, Chaghan Saray (Asadābād). There he conducted an inquiry at which the Kom explained that the Gujars had continued to renege on their agreement to pay a grazing fee for use of Kom pastureland. To substantiate their claims the Kom produced written contracts and official documents that defined both the agreement between Kom and Gujars and the territorial rights of the Kom tribe. The Gujars countered that the Kom had denied them access to the pastureland but they hedged when asked whether they had reneged on the agreement first. The wāli decided to draw up a new contract reiterating the terms of the original agreement; but before he could do so the Gujar representatives fled Chaghan Saray in the middle of the night without lending themselves to a new agreement.

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[3] This account comes primarily from one Kom leader who was intimately involved in the affair. As such, it may contain some distortion of the actual events, but the form in which it appears is ethnographically valid in that it expresses the belief of a majority of the Kom.

The Kom leaders then petitioned King Zāher Shāh directly in Kabul. The king ordered the wāli to round up the recalcitrant Gujar leaders and accompany them to Kabul where negotiations were to continue. However, before the Kom leaders were called in, the king (they allege) met secretly with the wāli and worked out a solution. Being partial to the Nuristanis[4] the king supposedly ordered the wāli to offer the Kom some land in the canal project near Jalalabad as compensation for their troubles and to deport the entire Gujar population to Turkestan where he would give them land for resettlement.[5]

The wāli then requested the Kom to give him time to consider the matter whereupon he would inform them of his decision. After a few days he announced that the king would give the Kom 600 jeribs of land at the canal project and that all Gujars living on Kom lands in the Kunar valley would have to leave, but that Gujars living on Kom land near the village of Dungal could remain there indefinitely without paying a grazing fee. Interestingly, the latter group of Gujars live in contact with a group of Meŝwāṇi in an area that stands on the route of transhumance between the Kunar and the high pastures that are the main area of controversy. It is precisely this group of Gŭǰírbaṇdëvols that pose the most acute threat to Kom territorial integrity. The Kom strongly rejected the wāli's decision, saying, in the words of one Kom leader, that "until all the Gujars are surgically excised to the core, we Kom will not see a cure."

There is a strong feeling among many Kom leaders that the ruling establishment of Afghanistan pursues a policy of divide-and-conquer toward the Nuristani tribes so that they may keep tribal unity weak and thereby govern with ease. The Kom see proposed settlements of the kind just illustrated as thinly disguised attempts to erode their territorial base by sanctioning an enemy in their midst.

A second reason for the Gŭǰírbaṇdëvols' success is that they have effectively bought off an important minority of Kom leaders, perpetrating a schism between the latter and the majority of Kom tribesmen. The sellout was effected in various ways. Some leaders, it is alleged, were bribed outright. Such allegations are almost impossible to prove but the apparently unmotivated magnanimity of such leaders toward their supposed enemies tends to reinforce suspicions. Other leaders own land close to Gŭǰírbaṇdëvol-infiltrated areas and have become economically dependent of them for their herding activities (Strand 1975: 131-132). Those Kom also fear reprisals on their poorly protected holdings if hostility between Kom and Gŭǰírbaṇdëvols were to escalate. In some remote Kom settlements east of the Kunar River

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[4]Regardless of any ill feelings that they may have toward the government in general, most Kom held the king in high regard. There is even a myth current in Nuristan that Zāher Shāh was actually illegitimately fathered by a prominent Nuristani general, making him a kind of clandestine kinsman of all Nuristanis.

[5]The canal project, built under Russian technical assistance to irrigate parts of Nangrahar Province, has provided Nuristanis with a major source of employment outside tribal territory. The proposed area of resettlement in Turkestan is in Qataghan Province where many Afghans from eastern Afghanistan have recently been given land. [cf., Barfield's paper in this volume].

many of the inhabitants have intermarried with Gujars creating affinal and matrilateral kinship obligations toward the Gujars. Finally, a few powerful Kom have made clandestine deals to collect privately a reduced grazing fee from certain Gujı̌́rbaṇdĕvols allowing the latter to remain unmolested within Kom territory.

For differing reasons these tribesmen stand to lose economically if the Gujars are expelled from Kom territory. They have been collectively labeled the guǰír dala ('Gujar faction') by their more numerous opponents (whom I shall call the traditionalist faction, led primarily by the representatives mentioned in the narrative above), and they have succeeded in subverting most concerted action against the Gujı̌́rbaṇdĕvols. They often do so by disrupting the community conferences at which collective tribal decisions are made so that the conferences break up before decisions can be reached. As a result, no unified strategy against the intruders can be maintained and any reprisals against the Gujı̌́rbaṇdĕvols are usually the work of individuals rather than of the community as a whole.

How has the Gujar faction been able to maintain a position that potentially threatens the territorial integrity of the whole tribe? Why have they not been repudiated and ostracized by the majority of tribesmen? Answers to these questions require a brief look at some fundamental principles underlying Kom society.

To prevent tribal disunity in a predominantly hostile interethnic environment, the Kom evolved an effective system of social cohesion embodied in the principles of citizenship and kinship. As the Kom define these principles, 'citizenship' (wugrĕ́mvor) is the set of rights and obligations incumbent on the residents of a community (grŏ́m), and 'kinship' (jatrĕvor) is the set of rights and obligations incumbent on persons who trace a relationship to a common ancestor. I have discussed these principles elsewhere (Strand 1974a and b) and will not elaborate on them here. Suffice it to say that appeals to these principles, backed up by sanctions of ostracism from community and kin, usually have been sufficient to prevent individuals from grossly contravening tribal interests.

However, the accelerating exposure of the Kom to the rules and values of the Afghan state increases the potential for individuals to diverge successfully from traditional concepts of citizenship and kinship. Tribesmen have the option of invoking either traditional or national values in pursuing their economic and political goals and they can find sanction for their actions through either traditional tribal means or through the Afghan-Islamic legal system. A striking example of the effect of such options on Kom social structure is the complete breakdown of lineage exogamy. Traditionally tribesmen were prohibited from marrying women of their own patrilineages under penalty of ostracism from the lineage. However, the potential for extracting a lower bride price from an agnate was exploited as soon as some tribesmen felt confident that such action could be supported by Islamic law which lacks any prohibition of agnatic marriage. Today, after three generations of Islamicization, agnatic relationship is hardly a consideration in the choice of a spouse.

The leaders of the Gujar faction use such alternative Islamic and nationalistic values to legitimize their position. They argue that the Gujars are essentially poor men and that the Kom should show benevolence towards their less fortunate Muslim brothers. They say that nowadays the whole country is uniformly Afghanistan and no longer divided into a number of independent tribal territories; therefore, because the Kom and the Guǰírbaṇdēvols are all citizens of Afghanistan, and because there is an excess of pastureland in the disputed area, the Kom have a patriotic duty to share their traditional land with their compatriots (<u>vatandārs</u>). These leaders have essentially enlarged the traditional sense of 'community' to include the community of Islam and the state of Afghanistan and they strongly imply that a stance against their position is either heretical or treasonous.

These arguments have persuaded a significant number of non-politicized tribesmen to lend at least passive support to the Gujar faction so that the political leaders in the Gujar faction command a disproportionately large backing of tribesmen. Leaders of the traditionalist faction realize that an attempt forcibly to impose sanctions against the leaders of the Gujar faction would pose a more serious threat to tribal unity than the potential loss of some unused pastureland to the Guǰírbaṇdēvols.

A continuation of the narrative above illustrates one way in which the Gujar faction operates. While the Kom leaders were still in Kabul word came to them that the leaders of the Gujar faction were trying to muster support for the wāli's plan. The leaders in Kabul sent word back to Nuristan saying that those who were challenging their resolve were acting against tribal unity and should be fined. However, the leaders of the Gujar faction had gathered enough backing to thwart any punishment. By withholding their share they then caused the funding that sustained the representatives in Kabul to collapse, forcing the representatives to return to Nuristan.

Having returned to Chaghan Saray the wāli ordered the Kom to resume negotiations. Out of frustration and resentment the former leaders refused to continue as tribal representatives. The leaders of the Gujar faction stepped into the vacuum and asserted themselves as new representatives. They concluded an agreement that preserved the status quo: it allowed the Gujars unmolested access to specified pasturelands (which they acknowledged as Kom territory) in return for a set payment and it required fines from any Gujar caught deviating from the specified areas.

The net result of all this litigation was almost nil. Helped by pressure from the wāli the Kom were able to collect the specified grazing fees for two years; but the following year the Gujars once again reneged claiming that the pastureland was public domain. Hostilities were about to resume but were halted by the advent of the republican coup d'état (of 1973). In a cycle that has continued since the inception of the conflict with the Gujars the situation had once again gone from hostility to litigation to hostility, costing the Kom dearly in time and resources and reinforcing the bitterness that divides the traditionalists from the Gujar faction.

Under the type of acephalous political organization found in Kom society tribal unity in times of crisis is maintainable only if all citizens are willing to make equal sacrifices. It violates an individual's sense of fairness and pride if he sees fellow tribesmen getting away with non-compliance. If a minority refuses to cooperate the majority loses its resolve and tribal unity collapses.

Both the Gujírbandëvols and the Afghan government exploit this potential for divisiveness in order to achieve their goals. They operate symbiotically; the Gujírbaṇdëvols act as a handy wedge which the government uses to split tribal unity and in so doing the government sanctions the Gujírbaṇdëvols' continued invasion of Kom territory. The effect of this symbiosis has been to polarize the Kom into a faction that clings to the traditional view of the Kom as an ethnic group trying to maintain its identity in a hostile interethnic environment versus a faction that sees the Kom as a vanquished people whose future course lies in acquiescence and homogenization with the rest of the Afghan state. It remains to be seen how or whether the Kom will survive this two-pronged threat to their ethnic integrity.

Ethnic Relations and Access to Resources
in Northeast Badakhshan

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As a means of adaptation for individuals and collectivities within the changing socio-ecological conditions of their environment, ethnicity is a dynamic phenomenon, subject to temporal redefinition and reorganization, with potential for defining structural integrity, distinctiveness and effectiveness for people so organized. This paper examines the changing nature of ethnic identities and intergroup relationships in northern Afghanistan in general and in the northeastern frontier regions of Badakhshan in particular - i.e., the Pamir and Wakhan Corridor areas.

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The predominantly Turkic and Tajik areas to the north of the Hindu Kush and Koh-i-Baba mountain ranges were claimed by Ahmad Shah Durrani (d. 1772) shortly after the creation of the independent state of Afghanistan in 1747 at Kandahar. Ahmad Shah received help in his bid for these territories from another soldier of fortune, an Uzbek officer named Haji Khan, Ahmad Shah's one-time comrade-in-arms in the army of the Persian monarch Nadir Shah Afshar (see MacGregor 1871:142; and Burns, *et al.*, 1839: 98). Consequently, the annexation was relatively bloodless.

These northern regions which later became known as Afghan Turkistan consisted of a number of principalities of various sizes, each ruled by a local khan with nominal allegience to the Pashtun monarch Ahmad Shah Durrani. Towards the end of the reign of Timur Shah (1772-1793), however, Quwat Khan, a member of the Qataghan tribe of Uzbeks established himself in Kunduz and proclaimed complete independence from the Afghan monarchy (Burns, *et al.*, 1839:98). This set the stage for almost a century of local political strife and jockeying for power among Uzbek and Tajik khans and mirs of Turkistan and Badakhshan. These factional struggles were based (as among the Saddozai, Barakzai and other Pashtun tribes in the south) on the idiom of segmentary opposition of kinship and/or ethnicity and always characterized by tyranny, intrigue and tragedy (fuller historical details are discussed in Shahrani, forthcoming).

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Generally throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, no prolonged political dominance by any single group over the entire territory of northern Afghanistan was achieved. Characteristically, petty local leaders demanded allegience from leaders of subjugated groups but made little attempt to assimilate members of minorities politically or socially. Conversely, the subjects of these states did not claim any rights, demand any privileges or have any expectations from their rulers, and none were extended. During times of peace, the relationship between various centers and the peripheral areas was more a matter of political stalemate than of active administrative control by a central authority. Conflict between various and successive local centers, however, was constant and marked by the rise and fall of local khanates.

The contemporary spatial distribution of ethnic enclaves throughout northern Afghanistan and the relative political strengths of the various groups reflects residues of this history in the nature of their access to resources and their contrasting statuses in relation to each other. On the one hand Uzbek and other Turkic speaking groups which were politically strong inhabit the low lying fertile central valley floors throughout most of Turkistan. In Badakhshan, likewise, a number of Uzbek tribes and some Sunni Tajiks jointly occupy some of the more productive valleys including Kishm, Argu, Darayim, Khash, Jirm and Baharak. Other relatively fertile but narrow river valleys of the upper Kukcha river and its tributaries are claimed by the Sunni Tajiks. On the other hand, politically weak Tajiki-speaking Sunni Hazara are found on the higher reaches of these central valleys. The Ismailite Wakhi, Ishkashimi, Sanglechi, Kurani, Munjani and Shighni, all of whom are distinct population categories without political clout, inhabit comparatively marginal and less productive lands in the upper reaches of the Oxus, the headwaters of the Kukcha and its tributary Yumgan and Warduj valleys. This pattern of spatial distribution of ethnic population and dimensions of power, particularly in Badakhshan, has changed little since the independent Turkistan period (see Kushkaki, 1923).[1]

Ethnic and tribal political processes of 19th century Afghan Turkistan had two notable characteristics. First, they were not mutually destructive only internecine. The ethnic name "Turk" applied to all those who spoke _Turki_ or _Turk teli_ (Turkic language) and who were members of one of the following tribal groups: Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kirghiz. In addition to their own version of the Turkic language, members of all groups were able to understand and converse in the literary form of _Turk teli_. They also collectively identified with Turki speakers to the north and west of the Oxus, as well as those of Eastern (Chinese) Turkistan. In spite of inter-tribal conflicts, Turkic peoples generally rallied as a collective political force against non-Turkic populations. As a dominant political group they occupied the most extensive and fertile agricultural lands and pasturage in

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[1]Similar spatial distributions of ethnic populations in the Bamian valley and adjacent areas of central Afghanistan are reported by Robert Canfield (1973a and 1973b). Similar patterns of population distribution and allocation of resources prevail in other parts of the country both on macro and micro-environmental scales.

Turkistan and controlled all the major strategic trade centers and trade routes of Turkistan. In conflicts among them, defeat, however violent, did not mean ethnic demise or destruction. Turkic dominance remained intact.

Second, no single defeat was seen as final. The various khanates of Turkistan all lacked a centrally organized administrative structure. Political influence outside the tribal territory was achieved and maintained either by actual use of military force or the threat of it. Consequently, to mitigate loss of life and destruction of property when threatened with military attack, the weaker political community either retreated to a more distant and less hospitable environment or submitted to the rule of tyranny and showed allegience by payments of tribute in the form of goods, money, valuables and slaves. In neither case did it give up the expectation of a dowran (turn to rule and be free) through rebellion. There was a common belief that political power never remains permanently with any single ethnic group, tribe or family and that all groups or families will one day have an opportunity to exercise their share of political authority. In other words, both political dominance and subservience are transient, a belief succinctly expressed in a Kirghiz-Kazakh proverb: "Eluu jilda el jangirat" [A nation regenerates in fifty years], (quoted in Allworth, 1973:3).

These characteristics of the ethnic and tribal conflicts of the past affected the ways people of the region adapted to subsequent political developments.

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In 1884, four years after the beginning of the reign of Amir Abdur Rahman, all of Afghan Turkistan including Badakhshan was brought under the control of the Kingdom of Kabul. His methods of tribal and ethnic pacification were not radically different from those practiced in the area before him - including among other things deportation of leading households to the capital or to distant territories and in some instances summary execution to eliminate any potential threat. But he also had an ideology of creating a politically and culturally unified Afghanistan free of tribalism and "feudalism." With the help of a relatively efficient police and administrative organization and a standing army, Amir Abdur Rahman for the first time instituted direct rule of the territories of northern Afghanistan under the Kingdom of Afghanistan. During this period, Afghanistan's northern borders, including the Wakhan Corridor and the Afghan Pamirs, were delineated and recognized by Russia, British India and Afghanistan. Recognition of these new boundaries marked the beginning of an attempt to isolate the Turkic populations of the region from the larger Turkic political community of Central Asia across the Oxus and the Pamirs which later led to the effectual cultural and socio-economic isolation of these peoples.

The peoples of Turkistan accepted the authority of the new Kabul government without much resistance except for minor revolts in Maimana (1882), Shighnan and Roshan (1882) and Badakhshan (1889) (see Dupree 1973:419). This lack of reaction on the part of Turkistanis and Badakhshis, I believe, was due to two facts. First, the prevailing Kabul authority put an end to the

chronic warfare in the area which sapped the human resources of the inhabitants; and, second, the terms of submission to the alien political authority were about the same as to the local khans - i.e., payment of taxes and a show of allegience. For many small minority ethnic groups, Pashtun merely replaced Turkic or Tajik sovereignty over them and the relationship between the local population and the state of Afghanistan continued on the same basis as with the indigenous Turko-Tajik Khanates of the earlier period. While the subjects were obliged to pay taxes and other tribute to the government, they did not have any rights or claims on the political authority. The character of this relationship was, indeed, one of passive submission and not active political support.

This general attitude of inactive participation on the part of the populations of the northern provinces (then known as Afghan Turkistan) in the political processes of the country continued through the reigns of Amir Habibullah, Amir Amanullah, King Nadir Shah and the early part of the reign of King Zahir Shah. At the same time, during the half century after the death of Amir Abdur Rahman (1901) the authority of the central government itself grew stronger.

Considerable population changes took place amid these circumstances. First, there was a significant Pashtun incursion. Abdur Rahman relied on Pashtun support and provided to Pashtun ample incentives to settle in the north. The first large-scale Pashtun immigration into the northwestern territories of Afghan Turkistan occurred during the 1890s when Amir Abdur Rahman persuaded his political rivals, the Ghilzai Pashtun pastoral nomadic tribesmen, to move in and occupy the region. By 1910 some Pashtun and Pashtu-speaking Baluch herders had reached the Kunduz areas in central Turkistan. More Pashtun maldar (nomadic herders) arrived in Turkistan during the 1930s and 1940s and began taking their herds on long seasonal migrations to the Lake Shiwa region of Badakhshan and other high pastures on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush mountains. The large number of Pashtun nomads displaced some Uzbek and Tajik communities and alienated some of their agricultural and pasture lands, which had an important impact on the nature of inter-ethnic relations in the area (cf., Tapper 1973, Kakar 1971, Dupree 1975).

Furthermore, Pashtun colonies of military and administrative personnel and their families had been established prior to the turn of the century in nearly all major towns as well as some rural areas in Turkistan, including Faizabad, the capital city of Badakhshan province. These early official colonies, with an ever increasing number of Pashtun military and civilian officials who either received land grants from the government or who bought public land and invited kinsmen and tribal members to join them, later developed into sizable communities within towns known as Deh Afghanan or Guzar-i-Afghani, as in the case of Faizabad. In rural areas such settlements were usually referred to by the tribal name of the settlers (see Kushkaki, 1923:174). It should be pointed out that until the early 1950s all military and police officers and most civilian officials (plus their entourage) in the northern provinces were drawn exclusively from among Pashtun or Tajik from the south of the Hindu Kush. Consequently, in addition to the Pashtun colony in Faizabad there is a sizable Pashtun settlement in Baharak, as well as a smaller one in Ishkashim at the entrance to the Wakhan

Corridor. Both of these areas are located in militarily strategic areas and have relatively fertile land.

Sizable Turkic (Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakh and Kirghiz) and Tajik populations also immigrated into Afghan Turkistan from north of the Oxus during the 1920s and 1930s following the Communist take-over of the Central Asian khanates (Dupree 1975: 405). Among them a group of some 2,000 Kirghiz herders left their traditional pasturage territories to take permanent refuge in the Afghan Pamirs. Prior to this flight and the consequent permanent year round confinement on the "roof of the world," these Kirghiz had little contact with the people of Badakhshan and the inhabitants of Wakhan. However, they have reluctantly had to establish relations with a number of ethnically distinctive communities under the new conditions in Badakhshan. While circumstances surrounding the Kirghiz entry into Badakhshan were considerably different from those of the Pashtun who came to the province, both groups had one thing in common: they were both culturally distinct populations who had not had extensive contact with the resident populations of the area and who had to create a niche for themselves within a new socio-economic and political-ecological environment.

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International and national political developments in Afghanistan have had a substantial influence on the processes of adaptation of both Kirghiz and Pashtun groups in Badakhshan during recent decades. To begin with, the implementation of closed border policies by the Soviet Union and Communist China have effectively ended socio-economic and direct cultural ties that Kirghiz and other Turkic groups enjoyed with the larger political community in Turkic Central Asia. The Soviet nationalities policy attempted to weaken existing pan-Turkic identity by forging separate "national" identities for each linguistic group as member republics of the Soviet Union. This policy has had a negative impact indirectly upon the Kirghiz as well as other Turkic populations in Afghanistan. A significant aspect of Soviet nationalities policy was the abolition of the use of Turki or Turk teli, written in Arabic characters, as the common literary form and medium of instruction in Soviet Central Asia. In its place, the use of different Turkic and non-Turkic languages, written in the cyrillic alphabet, was instituted. As a result of new language policies first in the Soviet Union and later in Chinese Turkistan, the production of large amounts of material in Turki for readers in Turkic Central Asia by presses in northern India came to a complete halt. The peoples of Afghan Turkistan had depended upon urban centers to the north of the Oxus and the north Indian Turki publications for much of their educational and literary materials. The consequence of these developments for the Turkic speaking populations in northern Afghanistan has been not only a contemporary loss of social contact with the larger Turkic populations of Central Asia but also the severence of contact with the historical heritage of literary Turkic languages and cultural traditions. Radio broadcasts in a number of different Turkic languages from Soviet Central Asia over the past several decades have provided the only means of contact for the peoples of Afghan Turkistan with the spoken languages and oral traditions of the peoples to the north of the Oxus.[2]

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[2]Afghanistan Radio did not broadcast in any of the Turkic languages spoken in the country until 1972. After a long parliamentary debate a

The government of Afghanistan has never formulated anything comparable to the so-called "Soviet Nationalities Policy." On the contrary, it has officially de-emphasized the presence of minority groups in the country and consistently taken measures to undermine larger ethnic and regional identities and allegiances. For example, the Afghan government dropped the term Turkistan, replacing it by the phrase manatiq-i-Shamal (northern regions), and divided the area a number of times for administrative purposes, each time assigning new names to various provinces. Whether done consciously or unconsciously, this policy has helped to weaken the larger ethnic and regional identities of the populations in the north. This unwritten policy, initiated by the Afghan government in its attempt to create a new modernized nation state, coupled with a lack of traditional and modern Turkic literature and education in Afghanistan, has at the present time effectively weakened the traditional collective identities of "Turkistani" and "Turk" by reducing them to Uzbek, Kirghiz, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kara Kalpaq, etc. Thus the Kirghiz who settled in the Afghan Pamirs (as well as other Turkic refugees in other parts of the country) were faced not only with the disintegration of a larger political identity, but were also stripped of group privileges in the context of the new Pashtun dominated state of Afghanistan. In addition, the Kirghiz of Afghanistan were further affected by their sheer physical isolation from other Turkic-speaking communities in northern Afghanistan and had to cope with the extremely marginal environmental conditions in the high Pamirs.

By contrast, the Pashtun population which settled in Badakhshan represented the politically dominant power and, by virtue of their direct association with it, enjoyed all the privileges and resources the new nation-state could offer. These included education (military and civilian), access to public office, cash income, reclaimed government land and a variety of other strategic resources and services not easily available to members of other ethnic groups. This practice by the governing power accorded with the conventional rules of political dynamics in this part of the world: the powerful have the right to exploit and the weak have to submit, perish or flee. Flight, however, is no longer an option since the takeover of Muslim Turkic Central Asia by the Soviet Union and China.

While the notion of civil and human rights for the subjugated may have been entertained by individual rulers in Turkestan or Afghanistan, no such rights existed, even in principle, until the promulgation of the first Constitution of Afghanistan (nizamnamah-ye-Asasi-e-Daulat-e-'Aliyah e-Afghanistan) by Amir Amanullah in 1923. In this document "the General Rights of the Subjects of Afghnaistan" were spelled out for the first time in Articles 8 through 24 of the Constitution, and the spirit of the law proclaimed equality of all citizens of the state (see Poullada, 1973: 277-289). Later constitutions in 1931 and 1964 also retained quite idealistic statements to the same effect. However, as Dupree has remarked,"Until recently, these rights [of Afghan subjects] were more violated than perpetuated" (1973:466).

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forty-five minute long program in Uzbek and Turkmen was introduced as part of minority "national languages programs" of Radio Afghanistan. The program was a definite success with northern audiences. For the first time it also created a dialogue on the air between the peoples of Afghan Turkistan and Soviet Central Asia. Much to the dismay of everyone in the region the entire "national languages program" of Radio Afghanistan was inexplicably abolished in 1974 by the Daoud regime.

Most rights and services which were granted to the citizens of the country on the basis of national laws were extended at differential rates to different ethnic populations residing in different parts of the country. For example, until the 1950s educational services were introduced in Badakhshan and other non-Pashtun or non-Tajik areas at an extremely slow pace to limited areas. The medium of instruction was always Persian or Pashtu and, in some cases, Tajiki and Turkic-speaking children were instructed in Pashtu, a practice which still continues in some areas of Badakhshan.[3] Most students from the northern provinces allowed to pursue secondary education in Kabul boarding schools were permitted to enter only vocational schools. Perhaps more significant was the fact that until about 1958 no students from Badakhshan of any ethnic origin were admitted to the military school which trained officers for the Afghan army. This restriction was removed only in the late 1950s when the central government had sufficiently strengthened its military base.

Similarly, health care and other social services in Badakhshan were introduced slowly compared to other parts of the country. There has been virtually no appreciable public investment in any kind of economic development anywhere in the province despite the fact that the economy of the province suffered considerably with the closure of trade routes to Chinese Turkistan. Many Uzbek and Tajik caravan traders from the province experienced considerable financial losses as well as the loss of social and political status as a result of the closure of the borders. Badakhshan province has remained the least developed and the regional economy is increasingly drained by a flood of non-essential but expensive consumer goods from the outside.

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Improved roads and market demands for raw materials, together with the termination of regional trade to and from Chinese Turkistan created particularly favorable conditions for the influx of traders from trading centers in other parts of the country. Most of these entrepreneurs are Pashtun and Tajik immigrants from areas south of the Hindu Kush. The newcomers virtually control the truck and bus transportation system throughout Badakhshan. In addition, a small group of Pashtun have dominated the used clothing market, the tea trade and the only commercial export-import company in Badakhshan.

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[3]In addition, all school textbooks and popular histories published in Afghanistan emphasize and often exaggerate the role of Pashtun in the development of political events in the region, while the role of Turkic-speaking and other minority groups in the history of the area is frequently ignored, misrepresented or presented in such a manner as to convey erroneous, negative images of their part in political processes. Consequently, despite alleged equality of Afghan citizens, Afghan school children are told that Afghanistan is primarily the product of Pashtun efforts. The negative psychological and sociological effects of this intentional or unintentional practice by Afghan educators upon the identity formation of non-Pashtun youth is undoubtedly enormous. Unitl the 1960s, for instance, many Turkic-speaking school children denied their Turkic identity and tried to pass as Tajik whenever possible, a practice encouraged and accepted by school officials. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that the content of school textbooks and histories published in Afghanistan will be corrected.

Unlike the Pashtun nomads and officials, the penetration of Pashtun traders into Badakhshan has not been limited to market towns or summer pastures. On the contrary, during the past decade their presence has been felt everywhere. A group of very enterprising Pashtun itinerant traders has entered the area of Wakhan and the Afghan Pamirs and their impact on the local economy as well as inter-ethnic politics has been marked. Pashtun are not, however, the only outside traders operating in the area. A number of Uzbek and Tajik itinerant traders from the villages and towns of central Badakhshan frequented these frontier regions even before the arrival of their Pashtun competitors. The nature of transactions among the ethnically diverse traders and Wakhi and Kirghiz inhabitants of the Corridor under the current political and economic conditions are of interest for two reasons. First, they represent new forms of socio-ecological adaptation and inter-ethnic competition for economic resources, mainly through trade and exchange rather than armed struggle. Second, they permit an examination of inter-ethnic relations at the local level under the new conditions and of consequent ethnic claims to differential statuses as these are reflected through exchange systems among members of different cultural categories.

Kirghiz speak a Turkic language of the same name, Kirghiz. They are relatively conservative practitioners of the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam. Kirghiz have inhabited the high valleys of the Afghan Pamirs (altitudes of from 13,000 to 16,000 feet) for half a century. Despite the loss of much of their traditional pasture land and of their socio-economic and cultural ties with other Turkic communities of Central Asia, they have successfully managed to retain their pastoral nomadic mode of adaptation in the high Pamirs (see Shahrani, 1976a, 1976b, 1974 and in press).

Wakhi are mixed farmers and herders in the Upper Oxus valley (altitudes of 9,500 to 11,500 feet). They speak Wakhi, an archaic Indo-Iranian language, and adhere to an Ismaili sect of Shi'a Islam. They refer to themselves as Khèek and their features are Iranian in comparison to the more Mongolian appearance of the Kirghiz.

Individual itinerant traders who operate in this region are from rural and urban areas outside the Corridor. Some of them have become permanent residents of Wakhan and have acquired large land holdings in the area. The majority of the approximately 35 traders are either Tajik or Uzbek speakers from central areas of Badakhshan. About ten Pashtun traders come from a village near Jalalabad. The Pashtun all seem to be related by kinship and marriage; a few of them are in partnership. All of these outside traders admit to having been less successful in their economic ventures in their original community and their success in Wakhan and the Pamirs varies greatly from one to another. All the traders are Sunni Muslims. They have varying degrees of competence in vernacular Wakhi and Kirghiz.

The traders maintain regular, direct contact with Kirghiz and Wakhi; they also have firsthand knowledge of wider market demands for agricultural and pastoral products. Successful traders seem to make full and effective use of local, regional and national political and economic realities to further their own interests. They are not only the economic middlemen linking primary producers with national market economies but also agents of social change and an important force for the development of the Kirghiz pastoral nomadic and Wakhi agro-pastoral subsistence systems which ultimately perpetuate the ethnic identity and separate communities of the Kirghiz and

Wakhi inhabitants of this frontier region.

Itinerant traders organize and perpetuate triadic trade and exchange relationships involving the Kirghiz and Wakhi in the larger regional and national economy. In this process the traders maintain strict control over the supply, type and amount of different market goods and the selection of pastoral and agricultural products acceptable in exchange for market goods. Traders have also fostered demand, even dependency, among farmers for market goods and have relied on credit or delayed exchange rather than direct and immediate exchange to maximize their profits. The choice of items brought into and taken out of the area is influenced most significantly by bulk, weight and the margin of profit to the trader. As a result selection of imported market goods disproportionately favors harmful "luxury" items such as tea and opium.

Among the traders the Pashtun have been the major suppliers of these two items, particularly large amounts of tea. In their economic exchange with Wakhi, Pashtun traders determine prices, terms of credit and, on occasion, induce Wakhi to buy goods by means of threats or deception. The traders generally have the cooperation and tacit approval of officials because of ethnic association, kinship relationships or bribery. While problems between Wakhi and Pashtun traders could end in the courts, Wakhi will generally meet Pashtun demands. Pashtun superiority over the Wakhi is further demonstrated by the number of Pashtun who have taken wives from Wakhi, bought Wakhi land and settled in the area; the reverse never happens.

Economic and social interaction between Pashtun traders and the Kirghiz is somewhat different. With the Kirghiz, Pashtun traders operate on the basis of uniform rates and terms of credit regardless of the social position of the individual Kirghiz or their place of residence. This is generally due to the strength of the Kirghiz' kin-based local political organization and the absence of Afghan government administrators in the Pamirs. The Kirghiz khan often negotiates the exchange values of commodities with the traders and, once settled, the rates are followed by all traders. Disputes are rarely taken to government officials but are generally resolved through the local political leaders - Khan, Be or Aqsaqal. There have been no exchanges of women between Kirghiz and Pashtun and the likelihood of intermarriage seems remote.

Uzbek and Tajik traders operate on low budgets and most of them deal mainly in trinkets and opium, although they may obtain some tea on credit from their Pashtun counterparts. Their attitude toward Wakhi is contemptuous but in dealing with them they do not generally resort to threats or engage in deceit. However, different rates and terms of credit are available to individuals on the basis of social position and rapport with the trader. Generally their interaction is amiable. Tajik and Uzbek from Badakhshan, traders and others, have married Wakhi women; but no Uzbek or Tajik women have been given to Wakhi men. The Wakhi, together with their neighbors the Kirghiz, have twice elected an Uzbek trader who lives in Wakhan to the Afghan Parliament as their representive during the latter part of the 1960s.

Uzbek and Tajik traders' economic and social relations with Kirghiz are on an equal footing. Some traders (especially Uzbek) have established permanent

partnerships with individual Kirghiz households and enjoy a great deal of help and respect. They observe uniform rates of exchange and terms of credit. Any conflict of interest is resolved through negotiation and the use of local mediators such as the khan. Violence or resort to the courts is rare. Both Uzbek and Tajik traders have married Kirghiz women; and although no women from either group have been given to the Kirghiz, there are no cultural objections on either side.

Status differences between Uzbek and Tajik are extremely hard to detect in Wakhan or in other parts of Badakhshan at present. All forms of exchange, including political support and exchange of women, are carried out with no reservations on either side. Pashtun, on the other hand, claim a higher status over both Tajik and Uzbek which is seen in some exchanges. Pashtun have married both Tajik and Uzbek women but Pashtun women in Badakhshan married to Tajik or Uzbek men, although not unheard of, are few.

Perhaps the most significant status differences are observed in exchanges between Kirghiz and Wakhi. The Kirghiz refer to Wakhi as Sart (a derogatory term) and regard them as non-believers. Feelings of contempt are mutual yet both groups have developed an increased economic dependence on one another. The Kirghiz, who cannot produce their own cereals in their high altitude habitat, depend on Wakhi for grain, obtained either directly from Wakhi or indirectly through traders. The Wakhi, on the other hand, depend on Kirghiz for animals and animal products both for subsistence and for paying the traders who offer better exchange rates for pastoral products than for agricultural produce. Wakhi and Kirghiz, who had very little contact with each other prior to the closure of the Soviet and Chinese borders, have had to establish close socio-economic ties with each other. They have achieved a successful economic exchange system in a situation filled with social tensions.

Both groups travel freely to each other's territory for trade and they exchange a variety of agricultural, pastoral and, at times, market goods. However, members of each group conduct themselves on these occasions in ways that communicate attitudes about their status claim vis-à-vis each other. While economic exchange moves both ways on the basis of market principles, other forms of exchange are quite asymmetric. For example, while the Wakhi eat food cooked by the Kirghiz, Kirghiz rarely eat with Wakhi. Kirghiz often spend months during the winter in Wakhi territory on trading trips spending most of the time in Wakhi households. Yet Kirghiz eat nothing cooked by Wakhi except tea. Kirghiz hire both Wakhi men and women to perform menial tasks for them but a Kirghiz will never be found working for a Wakhi.

Conflicts between the two groups are rarely, if ever, taken to the courts staffed by Pashtun and others from outside the Corridor. Instead they are resolved through negotiation or by Kirghiz threats of aggression. I have, however, encountered situations where the Wakhi have been accused of initiating aggression against individual Kirghiz, generally in Wakhi territory. Exchange of women or even the suggestion of sexual relations with Wakhi women outrages Kirghiz males; giving a Kirghiz woman to a Wakhi is unthinkable.

Perhaps the most vivid symbolic expression of the sharp value contrast Kirghiz see between themselves and their neighbors is demonstrated in an episode which I recorded during my field work. An old Kirghiz man died while in Wakhan on a trading journey in the winter of 1973. Such a situation had not arisen before. His kinsmen and companions refused to bury him in Wakhan, "the territory of the non-believers." Instead, they transported the corpse on horseback to the Pamirs, a journey of four days, so the man could be properly buried in Muslim soil.

* * *

On the basis of this discussion, a number of points may be emphasized. First, the dynamics of local political processes as well as social and economic intercourse in northeastern Afghanistan historically have been dominated by ethnic and tribal conflicts and competition for power, privilege and access to strategic resources. Second, allocation of social services and economic development projects are, at present, governed by an idiom of kinship as well as by ethnicity and spatial distance of the periphery from the center. Third, the traditional petty states of Turkistan, as well as the early Afghan monarchies, operated on principles of exploitation of subjects by rulers where subjects had no rights and could make no demands on the state. Reaction, or expression of discontent, was by means of retreat or revolt whenever possible. These options, however, became impossible vis-à-vis the modern Afghan state due to its increasingly strong military base, created with the help of foreign governments, and the prevailing condition of closed borders. Therefore, for a long time the traditional outlet for ethnic or tribal discontent has been absent but no alternative mode of expression has yet developed. Lastly, the submission of the Turkic and other minority groups to the rule of dominant Pashtun authority has been realized and the larger ethnic and regional identities of Turk and Turkistani effectively weakened. With the increasing spread of education in all parts of the country, however, attitudes are changing and the expression of demands for rights and privileges along ethnic and class lines as in the West may, of course, come.

The Impact of Pashtun Immigration on Nomadic Pastoralism in Northeastern Afghanistan

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The Pashtun emigration to Qataghan province was the last of the great migrations that put large numbers of Pashtun settlers into northern Afghanistan. Pashtunization of northern Afghanistan, the home of Turkic and Tajik peoples, had been a goal of the Afghan government since the time of Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901). This region was particularly attractive because it was potentially the richest part of the country, and because it was the frontier with Russia where politically reliable Pashtun provided security for the Pashtun government in Kabul. The large number of immigrants involved, the importance of government aid and the success in Pashtunizing Qataghan provides a case history of Pashtun penetration in an Uzbek province where interethnic competition was regulated by state policy. Specifically, I examine the recent expansion of Pashtun pastoralists into northern Qataghan and the dynamics of their competition and eventual coexistence with the Arab pastoralists already established there.

Qataghan in the 19th Century. Northeastern Afghanistan was traditionally divided between the lowland river valleys of Qataghan and the highland mountains of Badakhshan. Geographically Qataghan encompassed the Kunduz, Khanabad and Amu river valleys as these rivers left the mountains for the loess plains. There they formed large swamps inhabited mostly by Uzbek farmers through the 19th and into the present century. The name of the province was in fact taken from the dominant Qataghan clan of Uzbek who ruled the region. Because of endemic malaria, Qataghan was comparatively sparsely populated.

The Uzbek in the valleys were both farmers of irrigated land and sheep raising semi-nomads. The land was fertile and produced large surpluses. A British report of the 1830s praised its productivity: "As for grain its production in this country is limited by its being all but unsaleable. Any man who chooses may have ground to cultivate on the condition of paying an eighth to the Ameer... There is probably no country on earth where life can be supported cheaper or better. Though money is scarce there is no absolute poverty." (Burnes *et al.*, 1839: 131).

Those Uzbek not engaged in full time irrigation agriculture used the valley for permanent winter villages (*qishlog*) and moved to the grassy steppes and foothills above the valley floor to graze their sheep during the spring and summer. These migrations were short and were often combined with some form of sedentary agriculture.

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In the foothills themselves some Uzbek, or closely related Turkic people like the Moghal (Schurman 1962: 99;101), engaged in wheat farming or non-irrigated fields (lalmi). These villages marked the limit of Uzbek settlement of the plains and river valleys. The lalmi farmers were more nomadic than lowland valley Uzbek. For example, Moghal in Argu took their sheep for the summer to the high mountains of Shiwa in Badakhshan and Uzbek from Rustaq took sheep to Darwaz (Shurman 1962:100, G.A.B. 1972: 59), but both were economically dependent on agriculture.

In mountain valleys and hilltops above the Uzbek lowlands were the Tajik of Badakhshan. They were farmers of lalmi land and transhumant herders of cattle and goats. Depending on elevation Tajik grew wheat or barley, the highest villages being entirely dependent on barley. In comparison to the fertility of the lowland it was a stingy land. In many villages groves of mulberry trees provided an important addition to grain. Dried mulberries could be stored indefinitely and ground into flour should the harvest be poor. Villagers took their cattle and goats to luxuriant summer pastures (ailoq) which were within a day's walk of the village. Movement between the lower village and the highland pasture was therefore easy. Despite large tracts of available pasture Tajik husbandry was severely limited by the need to stable and stall-feed their animals through the harsh mountain winter. Lack of fodder limited the number of animals a Tajik could keep to the number he could support through the winter.

During the 19th century the Tajik of Badakhshan were conquered by the Uzbek of Qataghan. The result was disastrous. Badakhshan was devastated in an attempt by Mir Morad Beg of Kunduz to settle the fertile but deadly malarial swamps:

> Since the year 1830, Badakhshan and the countries subject to, or rather 'chuppowed' [raided] by Morad Beg on the northern bank of the Oxus, have been depopulated to stock the plains of Kunduz and Hazrat Imam. The aggregate of foreigners thus forcibly transplanted in these unhealthy marshes from that year to the present time is estimated by the Uzbeks at 25,000 families, or in round numbers 100,000 souls; and I question whether 6,000 of these were alive in 1838 so great had been the mortality in the space of 8 years. (Wood 1872:258).

Morad Beg felt that "because he lives in [Kunduz], he sees no reason why the peoples of the hills should not live there also. I ventured to suggest that a reason might be that they invariably died..." (Burnes et al., 1839: 121). The potential of the swamps of Qataghan was obviously limited.

Central Asian Arabs were the third major group in Qataghan in the late 19th century. They were pastoral nomads and, unlike the Uzbek, they made long range migrations that permitted them to exploit the swamps in the winter when malaria was not a problem and use the extensive high pastures of Badakhshan during the summer. The Central Asian Arab of Qataghan traditionally lived in Baghlan (Burnes et al., 1839:32), but they were only a small group until the 1870s. At that time large numbers of Arab fleeing the Russian conquest of the Zerafshan valley came to Qataghan and Afghan Turkestan. By the 1880s they were the second most populous ethnic group on the Turkestan Plain numbering 15,000 households (Kakar 1971: 139). In the Khanate of Bukhara the Arab had raised huge fat-tailed sheep. Operating

from fixed villages they made a long-range seasonal migration to the mountains. They sold their sheep profitably in Bukhara and were closely tied into the urban markets of the region (Khanikoff 1845: 72-73, 204-205). Upon their arrival in Qataghan Arab took advantage of the sparsely populated swamp and steppe land to establish winter quarters where they pleased. Arab were fully nomadic, changing winter quarters annually until 1921 when they received government land grants in Kunduz and Imam Saheb - the latter in the Amu River valley. From that time Arab nomadism has been based on fixed winter villages (qishloq) which were seasonally abandoned in the spring to move to the surrounding steppe and in the summer for the mountain pastures of Badakhshan 300 kilometers away. Mountain pasture was plentiful, in part because of the forced migration policy of Morad Beg that has so drastically reduced Badakhshan's population. Arab in Kunduz obtained ailoq in the Shiwa district of Badakhshan, those from Imam Saheb took theirs in Darwaz.

The Arab who came to Qataghan were bilingual in Persian and Uzbeki and had developed close ties with the Uzbek in the Khanate of Bukhara; none spoke Arabic. Socially and politically the Arab had allied themselves with the Turkic people against the Tajik and maintained this relationship with the Uzbek in Qataghan after their arrival in Afghanistan. Even today the Arab show a marked dislike of the Tajik. While they marry Tajik women, they refuse to marry Arab women to Tajik men.

At the end of the 19th century we find each of the three ethnic groups, Uzbek, Tajik and Arab, holding a particular niche in a large regional system. Urban centers and irrigated river valleys were under the control of Uzbek. Turkic semi-nomadism was common but involved only short migrations. Political and military power had allowed the Uzbek to control the most fertile valleys and plains as well as those accessible mountain valley territories like Rustaq, Argu and Faizabad. Lowland Uzbek settlement was limited by endemic malaria in the swampy valleys so that the population density was low.

The Tajiks, able to maintain their independence in the mountains of Badakhshan, had a mixed subsistence base of animal husbandry and lalmi agriculture. The Tajik niche is actually more complex than described since the mountains themselves contained Sunni Tajiks in the lower mountain valleys, like Rogh, Yaftal, Shar-i-Bozorg, Jurm, etc., and Shiite Tajik, often non-Persian speakers, in the highland valleys of Darwaz, Roshan, Shoghan and the Wakhan. This provided an extra dimension of religious differentation within the major niche of mixed mountain agriculture and pastoral transhumance (compare Canfield 1973a).

The Arab migrate 300 kilometers from their winter to summer pastures to exploit both highland and lowland resources. They avoided the malarial summers of the lowland river valleys by moving to the steppes and mountains. In the winter they returned and could use the vast swamps as winter pasture. During the summer the extensive grasslands of Badakhshan allowed the pasturage of far more animals than the Tajik could support, so there was room for many nomadic groups. Politically, by allying themselves with the Uzbek, the Arab were able to settle quietly and easily into Qataghan. The major Arab advantage was that long range migration allowed them to use the best pastures in each region on a seasonal basis and thus keep the maximum number of sheep.

Pashtun Immigration. Pashtun control of northern Afghanistan was only nominal until Amir Abdur Rahman solidified Pashtun control throughout Afghanistan. He encouraged, sometimes forcibly, the movement of Pashtun from south of the Hindu Kush into the Turkestan Plain between Balkh and Maimana (Tapper 1973). But the Pashtunization of Qataghan proceeded at a slow rate because of the infamous malarial swamps. Potential settlers, remembering the fate of the transplanted Tajik and the proverb, "If you want to die, go to Kunduz," showed a marked reluctance to move there. A Pashtun told me that at one time when a man planned to go from the south to Kunduz his relatives would hold his funeral before he left, so certain was his fate.

There was one exception to the general Pashtun fear of Qataghan: around the turn of the century Pashtun nomads began appearing in numbers in south Qataghan. The Pashtun nomads, like the Arab, discovered that a migratory life made the region more attractive and less dangerous. They settled in fixed villages in the swamps which they abandoned each spring and summer for the mountains. This pattern was common before the Pashtun came to Qataghan - of 5,000 households who lived in Khanabad, 4,000 were considered nomadic (C.A.M. 1894: 412). Traditional Pashtun nomadism was thus pre-adapted to the conditions in Qataghan.

Pashtun nomads originally settled in the Baghlan and Ghori districts of Qataghan. By 1914 they numbered more than 2,300 families with more arriving each year (G.A.B. 1972:6). A survey taken during the reorganization of the provincial government in 1921 by then War Minister Nadir Shah showed Pashtun nomads (locally referred to as Kandahari, regardless of origin) owned over 376,000 sheep (Kuskaki 1923:102). By the late 1920s Pashtun nomads were in evidence along the lower course of the Kunduz River. The majority of them had summer pasture in the Khawak Pass area of the Hindu Kush, 50-100 kilometers away, while the remainder made a much longer migration, 200-300 kilometers to Shiwa in Badakhshan (Schurman 1962: 405-408).

This influx of Pashtun nomads was confined primarily to southern Qataghan. Around 1910 some Kandahari moved into the Amu Valley of north Qataghan and some Pashtu-speaking Baluch arrived from the west (Tapper 1973:72). But informants agreed that the Pashtun were a small minority in north Qataghan until after the Second World War. Until that time the Arab and Uzbek were locally dominant and stories are still told of how many Pashtun immigrants were forced to flee to the Soviet Union to escape Uzbek raids.

The Development of South Qataghan. Pashtun presence in Qataghan might have remained limited to government officials and nomads had there not been a striking change in the ecology and economy of Qataghan itself. But in 1933 the most successful development project in recent Afghan history began as the Spinzar Company activities created from the disease-ridden swamps the richest province of Afghanistan. Three elements combined to make this possible: a strong local governor, investment capital and better transport. Shir Khan, the new governor, in cooperation with the first capitalists of Afghanistan used corvee labor to drain the swamps and reclaim the land. Qataghan quickly became the country's leading producer of rice and cotton. Investment in processing factories for ginning raw cotton and cotton mills gave the province an industrial flavor with planned towns dominated by the monopoly cotton company - Spinzar (White Gold).

A motorable road through the Hindu Kush via the Shibar Pass gave Qataghan a strong economic link to Kabul for the first time. Access to Soviet ports on the Amu Darya made cotton export a fairly simple matter. Forced sale of government swamp land to wealthy Kabuli created an incentive to development (Dupree 1973: 437), but the real credit goes to the local inhabitants and new immigrants who did the work. Attracted by cheap land and the decreased danger of malaria as the swamps receded, large numbers of people came to settle in Qataghan, notably Pashtun farmers from the south and Turkic refugees from the Soviet Union. Malaria itself was eradicated with the help of the United Nations in the early 1950s (Franck 1955: 28-29). By 1965 the population of the lowland valleys had tripled while the population in the mountains remained static. Reflecting this, the ethnic composition of valleys changed radically but Badakhshan remained as it was in the 19th century (Grötzbach 1972: 74-84). In the valleys the Pashtun were now strongly represented. Abdur Rahman's plan for a Pashtun presence in the northern plains had been accomplished. In the mid-1960s the breakdown was as follows:

	Percentage of the Population				
	Pashtun	Tajik	Uzbek	Turkoman	Hazara
Baghlan area	56	30	10	2	-
Pul-i-Khumri area	61	14	14	5	6
Kunduz area	41	43	13	2	1
Khanabad area	45	36	6	3	10
Taloqan area	10	10	60	1	10

(Source: Entienne 1972:83)

The most striking pattern in this chart is that the percentage of Pashtun is highest in the area where development occurred latest and was most extensive. Thus Taloqan, which was not part of the reclamation project, kept its Uzbek majority. Kunduz and Khanabad, developed in the 1930s, show a substantial Pashtun population but not a majority, reflecting the freer policy of land sales and distribution that marked the initial development of the region. Baghlan and Pul-i-Khumri, developed in the 1940s, show Pashtun majorities, reflecting the almost exclusively Pashtun nature of settlement there. This is particularly true for Pul-i-Khumri which was created as a new city in a sparsely inhabited area. Except in Taloqan the Uzbek became a small minority in the province they once dominated.

With the help of the national government the Pashtun strategy was to overwhelm the Uzbek with sheer numbers of settlers. The Pashtun were not as a rule trying to displace the Uzbek because land was at the time an expanding resource. Pashtun success was due to the position of Qataghan as an underpopulated frontier with plentiful land and water. Pashtun settlement could therefore proceed around the Uzbek and avoid dispossessing them. Conflict with the Uzbek was nevertheless inevitable and required government intervention in defense of the settlement policy (Akhramovich 1962:40).

With their numbers and government support the Pashtun succeeded in establishing themselves and quietly but effectively took control of the richest part of Qataghan. By the mid-1950s the frontier was closing. Substantial immigration had ended and land prices began to rise reflecting the end of free land, although prices still remained very low in comparison to land prices in mountain valleys (Grötzbach 1972: 267-78).

The Pashtun Move into North Qataghan. Pashtun immigration in northern Qataghan did not begin until after World War II. Like Taloqan, Imam Saheb in the Amu River valley was long settled by Uzbek. At the margins of the main canal system Arab and Turkoman had established qishloq in the 1920s and 1930s. Given the geography of the valley there was no easy way to expand the area of cultivable land beyond what had been done already by the non-Pashtun inhabitants without major additions to the canal system. Instead the government chose to irrigate a loess plain, the Dasht-i-Archi, and create a whole new settlement upstream from Imam Saheb. Diverting water from the Kokcha River in 1947, the project created an area of irrigated land equal to that under irrigation in Imam Saheb itself. This land was settled exclusively by Pashtun many of whom were exiled there for their part in the Safi rebellion. Archi is one of the few bazaars in Qataghan where Pashtu is commonly spoken; elsewhere the lingua franca is Persian. This preferential land distribution to the Pashtun suddenly established their presence in north Qataghan. Since the land was newly irrigated and not part of Imam Saheb itself, the Pashtun were not in direct competition with the Uzbek and to a certain extent the status quo was preserved. But many of the Pashtun in Archi were pastoralists and these people came into competition with the Arab. They presented particularly formidable competition because the Pashtun nomadic pastoralists filled the same niche as the Arab. For the first time the Arab no longer had a monopoly on long distance migration in north Qataghan.

The Pashtun nomads quickly adopted many aspects of Arab pastoralism. They got rid of the scrawny sheep commonly raised south of the Hindu Kush and invested in large fat-tailed and karakul sheep. With fixed bases in Archi and dependable pasture the Pashtun found sheep raising much more profitable and reliable than it had been south of the Hindu Kush. Here they were able to combine sedentary villages with pastoralism. The Pashtun became the majority nomads in north Qataghan as they had in south Qataghan. One old Pashtun nomad, who came as a boy to Imam Saheb 60 years ago, told me: "I remember when the Arab were a big people and the Kandahari only small. Now it is the Kandahari who are the big people and the Arab who are small." The change occurred rapidly, without violence, and because of the peculiar nature of pastoralism in Qataghan the Pashtun did not displace but augmented the Arab in the sheep business.

Pashtun nomads had a number of advantages over the Arab in north Qataghan:
1) Pashtun nomads traditionally engaged in long distance migration and were considered, even by the Arab, to be superior at the business of nomadic pastoralism.
2) Pashtun quickly outnumbered the Arab because of the large new settlement project on the Dasht-i-Archi.
3) Pashtun were better armed and more aggressive than the Arab. By cultivating a fierce reputation they had far less trouble than the Arab in dealing with other ethnic groups, especially during the migration.

4) As Pashtun in a non-Pashtun region of Afghanistan they could count on government aid in disputes, or at least biased decisions in their favor. It is ironic that often the staunchest supporters of the central government in Qataghan were Pashtun exiled north for rebellion against it.

Barth (1956) discussed Pashtun expansion in Swat in terms of niches in which the limit of Pashtun expansion was the fertile valleys that could be double-cropped. No two groups could hold the same niche, the competitive exclusion principle positing that the more efficient would drive out the less efficient. While this may have been the case in Swat, where Pashtun dominance was established by conquest, the competitive exclusion principle was not operative in Qataghan because peaceful expansion under the authority of a nation state limited the degree of conflict. In Qataghan both Arab and Pashtun were encapsulated by a higher political authority that wrote the rules of the game and defined what competition was permitted or prohibited. In this situation politics and government policy backed by military power were as much a part of the environment as the seasonal grasslands or rainfall. Both the Arab and Pashtun had to adapt to a political reality which maintained a peculiar but distinctive feature of pastoralism in Qataghan: privately owned spring and summer pastures.

Pasture land is not state, tribal or lineage property but is owned and inherited in single families. It was Nadir Shah in 1921 who created this situation by giving rights to Arab who first claimed the pasture. His firman gave them legal title as exclusive users of particular pastures. This was extremely important because nomads did not wander in Qataghan. Both the steppe in the spring and the summer pasture in Badakhshan were so rich and dependable that once nomads moved to their new pasture they stayed put for three months.

Had all the pasture been initially owned by Arab trouble would have been inevitable, but the government traditionally reserved the best pastures for its own livestock. The high plateau of Dasht-i-Ish in Darwaz was used exclusively for government herds. As state pasture (Sarkari) it was prohibited to the Arab who had ailoq on the mountain slopes above and below Dasht-i-Ish. The government eventually stopped keeping animals, most of which disappeared during the Saqqaoist uprising in 1929, and when the Pashtun arrived in Archi they not only received irrigated land but the large pastures of Ish. Arab and Pashtun now both had their own areas with the same kind of firman. The Pashtun in the steppe were given pasture between Arab holdings and the steppe began to resemble a checkerboard of Pashtun and Arab households. Only the swamps were common to all but even these today are regulated, though illegally, by the border commissar who demands a fee for each herd in his jurisdiction.

Each nomad family that acquired property rights to a pasture found it highly advantageous to maintain the status quo. Thus Pashtun who received title to pasture felt no obligation toward newly arrived Pashtun to share pasture or to help them obtain it from Arab holdings. From the very beginning solidarity among pasture owners was more important than ethnic ties. Competition for scarce resources therefore was at a family level and rarely threatened the interests of Arab or Pashtun pastoralists as a whole.

At present the most critical resource is an ailoq in the mountains for summer pasture. Nomads who do not own pasture must obtain pasture from those who do if they wish to remain nomadic pastoralists. This can be obtained in three ways: purchase, rental or theft.

Pastoralism is a risky business and because of various disasters a nomad may lose all his sheep. If he owns a good 1,000 sheep ailoq in a secure area he may decide to sell it. For example, the ailoq in Darwaz are large and whole areas are securely controlled by Arab. In the mid-1950s an Arab lost his sheep and sold his ailoq to a Pashtun for 80,000 afghani. The Pashtun used the pasture but was troubled by Arab sheep thieves, relatives of the original owner, who resented his presence. After ten years of this he agreed to pay the former owner an annual bribe of 4,000 afghani to call off his relatives. The harassment stopped and relations became more friendly. Buying an ailoq is a major investment and those Pashtun who have purchased them have usually "traded up" from a less satisfactory ailoq and are therefore already established and fairly wealthy.

For the poor nomad the theft of an ailoq is a way of becoming established. A Pashtun cannot force an Arab out since violence is prohibited by the government; but should an Arab in a marginal area be unable to use his ailoq, a Pashtun will steal it. This does not happen with large ailoq in Darwaz because other Arab would not permit the squatter to move in and, besides, wealthy Pashtun are more than willing to buy a first class ailoq. It is the more marginal pasture areas, in the highlands of Rogh, for example, that are at risk. The ailoq are smaller and owned by poorer Arab. Should they lose their sheep they can expect no compensation. Since this interaction takes place between poor Arab and pastureless Pashtun, the conflict is of little interest to the better established nomads. In fact, many of the ailoq in Upper Rogh were voluntarily abandoned by rich Arab who owned two ailoq and found the poorer one not worth keeping.

Renting pasture is by far the most common means of acquiring at least temproary pasturage. Many owners of ailoq have more pasture than sheep. They are willing to rent the excess to other pastoralists. Rentals range from 4,000 to 15,000 afs. depending on the size and quality of the pasture. One Arab who owns a 3,000 sheep ailoq rents it out in 800 sheep parcels and uses part for himself. Contracts are not automatically renewable and price gouging is not unknown. An Arab who rented a pasture to a Pashtun at an inflated price explained,"What can he do? He is majbur [compelled], he has no ailoq." The renting of pasture allows the maximum use of pasture without disturbing the nature of ownership. The system is kept intact ultimately by the government. Until recently troops were posted in Dasht-i-Ish and Dasht-i-Shiwa to keep the peace. While the government favors the Pashtun it also grants rights to the Arab, and the government wants stability. It is willing to allow marginal Pashtun to replace marginal Arab but ultimately the guarantee of land rights creates a peaceful atmosphere in an area remote from centers of population.

When competition for critical resources is controlled by a nation state via private property, ethnic differences are often less important than economic differences. As the price of sheep rose in the past ten years wealthy Pashtun and Arab pastoralists began to have more in common with each other than with their poorer relations. Private property transferred the burden of direct competition to the more marginal members of each group. The

conservative interests of large pasture owners created a barrier that allowed Arab and Pashtun to co-exist because access to critical resources was ultimately guaranteed by the central government. Pashtun had a competitive advantage over the Arab, but the state defined the arena of competition so that households rather than corporate tribal groups were the competitive units. By encapsulating tribal groups the central government effectively reduced their independence of action. Pashtun in the north are as effectively dominated by the Afghan state as any other ethnic group. The Afghan government used Pashtun immigration as a tool to gain better control of non-Pashtun regions and the Pashtunization of Qataghan was a success. But while Pashtun were the major beneficiaries the interests of the government and the tribal Pashtun were not the same. The government, through private property and government protection of other ethnic groups' rights, came to control the troublesome Pashtun more effectively than had ever been possible in their traditional homeland south of the Hindu Kush.

Religious Myth as Ethnic Boundary

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We were convened in this symposium to discuss "evolving interfaces" of the various minority ethnic groups in Afghanistan with "dominant and intrusive Pakhtun." In this paper I want to address the topic by questioning an assumption implicit in this choice of words. They assume that the important social distinctions in traditional Afghanistan society are ethnic. I would like to propose another way to think about that, or at least to suggest that this assumption ought not always to be made in discussions of traditional socio-political relations in Afghanistan. It needs rather to be examined.

I shall raise my question by discussing a topic that at first may seem irrelevant, the sectarian myths that are told among the people of Afghanistan. By _sectarian_ I mean things associated with the beliefs of the three Muslim _mazhab_ in Afghanistan - Sunnis, Imami Shiites and Ismaili Shiites. The terms _sect_ and _sectarian_ may grate on the sensibilities of some persons but I have no better terms for now. The word _mazhab_, which the Afghans most often use for the distinctions I call sects, properly means "school" - that is, a school of Islamic jurisprudence. The term designates a tradition of legal interpretation and, therefore, does not necessarily suggest an organized social collectivity such as the word _sect_ implies. But in Afghanistan, _mazhab_ suggests groupings of people who have followed different schools of Islamic interpretation. In times past, these groups have warred against each other; they have _organized against_ each other. The term _mazhab_ in the Afghan setting connotes more than mere dogmatic entities. It suggests socially and politically significant groupings of people. So the term _sect_ seems to me an adequate if not wholly satisfactory translation for the proper term _mazhab_ as used for an important social distinction in Afghanistan society (compare Gulick 1976: 168 _f_.).

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I have benefited from comments made on an earlier draft of the paper by Jon Anderson and Dale Eickelman. Although Karen Blu had not read the previous draft of the paper, her comments on ethnicity emboldened me to make my point more forcefully. I also thank Vernon Kramme and Richard Blocher for making special arrangements for me to prepare a previous draft of this manuscript through the Computing Facilities of Washington University. I am, finally, grateful to the editors of this work for allowing me to remove a major portion of the paper delivered at the original symposium and to develop it in a different way for another publication.

Bt <u>myth</u> I mean stories that the Afghan people tell to express their conception of the critical social distinctions in their society. Leach used the term "myth" in this sense. Stories such as I will tell here are, to Leach, told "as a ritual act which justifies the particular attitude adopted by the teller at the moment of the telling" (Leach 1954: 77). For Leach "sacred tales have no special characteristics which make them any different from the tales about local happenings twenty years ago. Both kinds have the same function" (<u>ibid</u>., 277). They identify the story teller's relationship to one of several rival social groupings in his society and indicate his attitude on the issues that rend these groupings apart (<u>ibid</u>., 277). They are also myths in a sense that Lévi-Strauss has expressed: that myths represent (like everything else cultural for Lévi-Strauss) binary distinctions inherent in human thought, expressed in the vehicles of thought. Lévi-Strauss sees myth as a kind of grand metaphor which reveals "a primary form of discursive thought" (1963:102). He believes "the demands to which [myth] responds and the way in which it tries to meet them are primarily of an intellectual kind" (1963:104) - or that intellectual understanding operates "by means of binary oppositions" and coincides with "the first manifestations of symbolism" (1963:102). I do not know whether this study of Afghan myth would please Lévi-Strauss or other structural anthropologists; but it seems interesting to me that, in fact, the mythical system to which these stories belong can be broken down into a series of nested binary contrasts.

The two views of myth seem very contrary. Lévi-Strauss's view of myth draws attention to the common functions of human thought in organizing human experience; Leach's view draws attention to the social (or political) significance of cultural activities (such as myth-telling). But both views draw attention to a point I want to emphasize here. In Afghanistan sectarian distinctions may be more resistent to change than ethnic distinctions; they may be more deeply embedded in the Afghan psyche - and hence may be for some purposes more "important" - than the ethnic distinctions we were convened to discuss here.

The myths I shall tell here may be called "hero" myths. They focus on the acts and personal qualities of the heroes of the three sect groups. Afghan sectarian hero myths resemble some of the myths that are told among the various Kachin communities in highland Burma that Leach studied. They describe events and relationships in the lives of past heroes, and by implication they represent the different claims of contemporary groups of people upon highly desired resources. Among the Kachin a commonly told myth was phrased differently by different rival groups so as to justify their various claims to superior authority. "Without seriously altering the structure of the mythological story, each of the given clans named - as well as several others - can put forward a case to be regarded as the senior group" (Leach 1954: 271; <u>cf</u>., pp. 264-278). The hero myths told by the rival sect groups in Afghanistan are similar, except that the heroes are not ancestors - or at least they are not venerated because they are lineage heads. They are venerated as prominent figures in Islam.

The heroes of a Muslim sect are the persons who once championed its causes or otherwise stood for the sect in a major sectarian quarrel. The three sects in Afghanistan have historically differed over which persons had the right to lead the Muslim community. Almost

immediately after the Prophet's death a dispute arose over who should succeed him as the leader of the Muslim community. The dispute has continued in different guises until the present time. Each of the three sects in Afghanistan holds a dogmatic position on the historic quarrels over Islamic leadership. Sunni Muslims believe the rightful successors of Muhammad were the first four Caliphs - Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali - known as the "four friends" (of Muhammad). They are regarded by the Sunnis with special reverence because of their close association with the Prophet. But Sunnis do not regard the Caliphs that followed Ali with much esteem because of their personal and moral failures and because they consistently flouted the advice offered by the religious scholars of their times. Those Caliphs were posthumously stripped by Ottoman theologians of the religious titles they enjoyed in life.

Shiites, in contrast to the Sunnis, believe that from the beginning the only rightful successor of the Prophet was Ali and consider the other three no better than usurpers. Ali's superior right to succeed the Prophet was based on his close family relationship to the Prophet: he was Muhammad's cousin and, by his marriage to Fatima, his son-in-law. So Shiites emphasize authority deriving from family ties with Muhammad. They especially venerate the "five persons," the panj tan, ("five fingers"), i.e., Muhammad, Fatima, Ali and their two sons, Hasan and Hosayn. Ali's successors, they say, should have been the senior males in Ali's family line. These they call "Imam" (instead of "Caliph"). But the Shiites have divided among themselves on who the real Imams were - that is, on which lineage of Alid's was primary and therefore authoritative. The two Shiite sects of Afghanistan agree on the line of Imams after Ali down to the seventh generation. They differ over who should have been recognized as the seventh Imam. The sect known as Imamis (or "Twelvers") follow one son of the sixth Imam and a line of his descendants that ended with the twelfth Imam who disappeared; they now await his return at the end of this age. The other sect, the Ismailis, follow another son of the sixth Imam and a line of his descendants known to us as the "Aga Khans."

* * *

These differences over the rightful successor of Muhammad are evident in the stories the Sunnis and Imami Shiites tell about the early Muslin heroes. The Sunni and Imami Shiite hero myths that follow were told to me by a Shiite mullah. He seems to have been a fairly good source of information about the beliefs of both groups. He grew up as a Shiite, reading Shiite books as a young man to his family and friends; he lived for several years in a dormitory with Sunni boys while in grammar school, where he read Sunni books. Today he says he does not believe in any religion.

The sectarian myths I heard from him are of two types: those that describe heroes as extraordinarily good or strong (these are the stories one tells about the heroes of one's own sect), and those that describe heroes as extraordinarily wicked or nasty (these are the stories one tells about the heroes of a rival sect). I shall describe and illustrate these two types of hero myths and then discuss what this contrast "says" about the "evolving interfaces" of socio-political groups in Afghanistan.

"Nice" Hero Myths. The Sunnis of course tell stories about the superior piety and power of the "four friends" (Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman, Ali). Here is an example, translated for me from a religious book, Gulshan-i-Arifin, by Mowlana Sultan Aref, that I purchased in Kabul.

> Hazrat-i-Omar was full of courage. All real believers have courage. When Omar conquered Egypt he appointed a just governor there. The next year there was a drought and the Nile River was almost dry. The people went to the governor and told him that every year [when there was a drought] they threw a beautiful maiden to the god of the Nile. The governor wrote to Omar and Omar wrote to the Nile River saying, "Rise, by the name of God," and the river rose.

A similar story is told about Abu Bakr, presumably to legitimize Abu Bakr's claim to the Caliphate.

> When Muhammad went up into the seventh heaven [my Shiite friend said] God said to him "Asalaam Alaykum " and Muhammad said, "Wa'leykom 'Asalum;" Gabriel was with him and he was very afraid but Muhammad said, "Don't be afraid, because I am going along with you." There was a white curtain there and a tray of palaw [the Afghan's most popular food]. Then a hand came from under the curtain and said, "I will eat with you," and the hand ate with Muhammad. Sunnis believe the voice that spoke to him was much like that of Abu Bakr's. It was supposed to be God's voice but it was like Abu Bakr's. When Muhammad came back to him and Abu Bakr said "Salaam Alaykum" to him, Muhammad recognized that it was the voice of Abu Bakr. He is like the tongue of God, they say, because since God has no mouth He talks for God, like Moses did.

The Shiites in a similar way venerate Ali. The Sunnis do not dispute this, of course, as they include Ali among the "four friends." It seems understandable that the stories about Ali's powers abound in Afghanistan, as there is no one to dispute them. It is said that Ali had superhuman power, like Omar, that he made the Band-i-Amir lakes, that he killed "dragons" in Bamian, and so on. One story about Ali's powers you might not have heard is this:

> The sister of Hazrat-i-Omar was given to Ali one night [my friend once told me]. An angel came to her and told her she was to marry him and a power not her own brought her to him that night. Ali himself said the neka [Islamic marriage rites] and the four corners of the room acted as the four witnesses [required by Islamic law for legal marriage]. And that night Ali had sexual relations with her seven times. Next morning Omar saw that there were seven washcloths there [required for cleansing after sexual relations, according to Islamic law]. And he saw his sister reading a Quran. He said to her, "Why have you become a Muslim?"

Also, Ali had, Shiites insist, the preeminent right to be the first Caliph.

According to Shiites, when Muhammad ascended into heaven he found evidence that Ali - not Abu Bakr - belonged there.

> When Muhammad was entering this place (heaven) he was stopped by a lion and Gabriel told Muhammad he would have to give him something or he wouldn't let him go. So Muhammad gave him his ring which had a ruby stone on it and the lion let him go in. This is why it's good to pray with a ruby ring on your right hand. The next morning when Muhammad came to earth he went to the mosque to pray and on the way Ali met him and asked, jokingly, "Where have you been?" and he gave him his ruby ring. This is why Ali is called "The Lion of God." Muhammad said, "Now I know you are the lion of God."

Sunnis and Shiites alike venerate Ali. But as you can see, they differ on whether Ali had any place in the heavenly realms when Muhammad visited there, for the Sunnis believe it was Abu Bakr that Muhammad encountered there. By implication, of course, the two versions of this story indicate that they disagree on who had the right to be the first Caliph. Shiites and Sunnis differ on some other matters concerning rightful succession, for as I said earlier, the Shiites venerate some heroes the Sunnis do not recognize. The Shiites especially cherish the memory of Hosayn, who along with 69 other persons was cruelly murdered by Sunni troops in the early days of Islam. The Shiite mullah told me the following about Hosayn. The story resembles a Christian theme:[1]

> There is a chapter in one of my books [which he had inherited from an uncle] about Hosayn's acceptance of the death of his relatives before the world was created. God did many things before the beginning of the world. He wanted to test people's faith and also to see who would bear the most suffering. There was a glass of poison in which all the troubles of the world were mixed. Adam took some, then others took some; but they did not take it all and the worst of it was in the bottom. Then it came Hosayn's turn. So he said, "I will take it all. I will give all so that Muhammad's followers will be forgiven." And God swore that on Doomsday He would forgive so many of Muhammad's followers that Fatima would be happy and say, "O God, this is worth the price of my son's blood." God will make her, Hosayn and the others [of Muhammad's family] happy by forgiving people because they have given their blood for the sins of Muhammad's followers to win forgiveness for them.

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[1] Compare the following verses from the New Testament:
"Father,... remove this cup from me; nevertheless..." (Mark 14:36).
"Since the children share in the flesh and blood, he Jesus himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage."
(Hebrews 2:14,15).
"While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us... therefore, we are now justified by his blood."
(Romans 5: 6,8, 9).
"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."
(I Peter 2: 24).

"Nasty" Hero Myths. All these stories emphasize the unique and special powers of sectarian heroes. But traditional Afghans also tell stories defaming the heroes of rival sect groups. Sunnis seldom defame the early and illustrious heroes of the Shiites but they do defame less prominent and subsequent Shiite heroes, whom we sometimes call their "saints," mostly to indicate that they are imposters. I omit here the Sunni pejorative stories about Shiite saints in order to avoid the extended discussion of Muslim saints that that would require. But with regard to the great early heroes of Islam already mentioned above, the Shiites have long defamed all the great heroes of Sunnism except Ali. As a matter of dogma the Shiites heap scorn upon the first three Caliphs, Abu Bakr, Omar and Asman, for Shiite dogma insists that Ali and his family alone have the right to lead the Muslim community. Shiite ridicule of the early Caliphs of course angers Sunnis intensely. A Sunni ruler of Afghanistan, Amir Abdul Rahman, once banned Shiite books for this reason (Kakar 1974: 303-309). Here is an example of how the Shiites defame Osman, as told by the Shiite mullah:

> Shias believe Osman killed one of his wives who was a daughter of Muhammad. He beat her with a heavy stick from a camel's chair. She had gone three times to Muhammad and told him that Osman was beating her and she was afraid he might kill her. But Muhammad wanted to show the right of a husband over the wife so he sent her back to her husband. After that, one of Muhammad's enemies - he was a cousin of Osman who in one of the battles broke the tooth of Muhammad - this man came to Osman's house. Gabriel came to Muhammad and told him: "The man who broke your tooth is in Osman's house. Now send Ali with this sword." This sword, according to the Sunnis, came from God to Muhammad in a box but according to the Shias it was brought only for special purposes to the family of Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. Muhammad sent Ali but [when he got there] Osman told him there was no one there. He had hidden his cousin under a camel saddle. When Ali left Osman sent his cousin out on a camel and gave him water. But on the way the camel became sick and couldn't go. It just laid down. So the man began to walk. Then his shoe straps broke. A bird came and took his food from him and another bird put his beak through the skin that held the water. So finally he was crawling and about to die. Gabriel came and told Muhammad to send Ali to a certain place to find that man and Ali found him and killed him there and brought his head back with him. But when Osman heard it he accused his wife of telling Ali where the man was - he didn't believe in Muhammad's spiritual powers. So he beat her until she died.

* * *

The contrast between the two traditions of myth telling can be charted to show the categorical differences implied in the two traditions. The myths differ as to whether they are approving ("nice heroes") or disapproving ("nasty heroes") and as to whether the speaker is Sunni or Shiite. (Figure 1).

Figure 1

AFGHAN HERO MYTHS

Own Heroes		Outsiders' Heroes	
Sunni	Imami	Re: Imami heroes	Re: Sunni heroes
Omar: Nile	Ali: Virility		
			Osman: wife killer
Abu Bakr: in heaven	Ali: in heaven		
	Hosayn: Atonement		

Observe that the contrasts are binary. Lévi-Strauss, I mentioned, sees in myth evidence of the dualistic workings of the human mind. Structuralists seem to find it almost everywhere. Consider the similarity between the binary structural contrasts implied in these Afghan myths and the contrast that Maybury-Lewis described in the structure of Shavante society. Maybury-Lewis argued that "...Akwe-Shavante society can best be understood in terms of the dichotomy between waniwiha [insiders] and wasi're'wa [outsiders]" (1967:299). In this sense the structure of Afghan society may correspond with Maybury-Lewis's concept of a "dual organization" as "an ideal type corresponding to a theoretical society in which every aspect of the life of its members is ordered according to a single antithetical formula" (1967:298). He puts it that "the best explanatory models for Shavante society are all dyadic ones " (1967:299). The structure of the Afghan worldview, as manifest in these hero myths, would seem to be as plainly dualistic as that of the Shavante. This would, I suppose, please Lévi-Strauss: once again the pervasive influence of the binary form of thought is revealed!

Now consider the social significance of the contrasts that these myths reveal. They exemplify the rivalries between the sect groups in Afghanistan. I think these rivalries ought to receive closer attention when we try to assess traditional socio-political relations in Afghanistan society. These sectarian contrasts are contemporary. The old wars of the past, with their sectarian overtones, persist in tales of sectarian heroes. Many Afghan heroes are religious figures. The moral domain of social affairs is imbued with religious ideals expressed not only in religious dogma and ritual but also personified by exemplary, even divine, heroes. The traditional heroes of the Afghan people are, on the whole, religious personalities - Ali, Hosayn, Abu Bakr. There are, to be sure, other Afghan heroes like Ahmad Shah Baba or Khushal Khan Khattak. But the heroes that, it seems to me, commonly inspire the admiration and strong feeling of most Afghans are religious.

And if this is so, then how shall we understand traditional Afghanistan society? What issues do the Afghans hold most dear if not religious ones? And if so, then what differences do they hold most tenaciously? The underlying bonds of trust and respect - how do they fall? I think, again, they fall along sectarian lines. The Afghan people marry within the sect, they socialize within the sect, they buy and sell on a regular basis within the sect (although less so now in the cities, cf., Canfield 1973). I wonder if as much could be said for ethnic distinctions. People tend to marry within their ethnic group, it is true, but they do not marry or socialize with, or buy and sell on a regular basis with, members of their own ethnic group unless they are members of the same sect.

I do not mean to insist that sectarian distinctions are always for all purposes more significant in Afghan social affairs than ethnic differences - though I personally suspect they often are - but I do mean to say that no study of Afghan traditional socio-political alignments can ignore the sectarian differences. We must not assume that sectarian alignments are somehow irrelevant to politics, including ethnic politics, simply because the Afghans are no longer fighting sectarian wars, nor should we assume that sectarian alignments are now politically benign. Traditional cultural differences still impinge on social life, the old sectarian contrasts as well as the ethnic ones. The centuries-old quarrels between Muslims still blemish the realm of social trust. The stories that Afghans tell about their heroes reveal that those old blemishes persist, still there to derail social relations between people. Students of Afghan society must be alert to the ways that this tradition affects social relations, including ethnic ones, today. Afghanistan may be changing and with the change the old alignments may be being transformed. But the old sectarian alignments are not dead.

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